

**REVITALIZING AN URBAN CHURCH:
A MODEL OF OUTREACH MINISTRY**

**A Professional Project
Presented to
the Faculty of the
School of Theology at Claremont**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Ministry**

**by
Leon Peter Sylvester
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This professional project, completed by

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*has been presented to and accepted by the Faculty
of the School of Theology at Claremont in partial
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Abstract

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by

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Christian ministry, in two Black urban United Methodist churches, appears to be lacking in enthusiasm for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach by its members. This study seeks to examine the state of these two churches in order to revive them.

Additionally, this study involves observations from and experiences gained in the secular workplace, and, correspondence, church conference records, and interviews with members from these two churches--one in Pasadena, the other in Los Angeles, California.

Also, this study looks at strategies used to develop Christian fellowship and Christian outreach in early Methodism, and then examines the demographics of the community these two churches represent in order to find trends in the strategies of the early church that can be applicable today.

Finally, with such a model of ministry, and approaching the turn of the century, this writer envisages Christian fellowship and Christian outreach as a dynamic force, permitting the advent of a spiritual paradigm shift.

Acknowledgements

As a child growing up in the Caribbean Island of Trinidad in the West Indies, there was a strong desire to experience the emotion and the spirituality that emanated from a small Pentecostal church on the island. I wanted to understand what was happening and why. Three nights a week and all day on Sunday, everyone--the old and the young--appeared to be enjoying Christian fellowship at that church. By contrast, my once-a-week-on-Sunday at the Roman Catholic church experience was dull and lacked the motivating force that seemed to keep the Pentecostal worshippers happy.

That joyful church experience evaded me for most of my early years but there was always a feeling that, although the emotional impact was never experienced, there was a close relationship this writer had with Jesus Christ. This love relationship grew through Bible correspondence courses--creating a bond that has surfaced after all these years--allowing me to become a workman in Christ's vineyard beginning in 1976.

While the image of that small Pentecostal church remains on my mind, this writer realizes that in spite of outward forms of Christian fellowship, church members are polarized, some angry and hostile. This observation stems from experiences gained in two Black urban United Methodist churches.

This writer wrestled with himself, giving up his secular job for ministry, not knowing what his greeting would be in

these United States, having come from a third world country. But here was a situation that needed to be addressed then, as well as now. What will it take to be able to win a people to Jesus Christ--not just on their day of praise and worship, but every day?

Taking the biblical mandate as a road map and reaching out in the highways and byways in an attempt to foster Christian fellowship and Christian outreach, the Lord Jesus Christ made a way by allowing me to work hard and be a good workman so that when God examines my work there will be no shame (2 Tim. 2:15). While that burning desire to experience the emotional impact of that small Pentecostal church lives on, another emotional drive has taken over. Considered an outsider like Amos, this writer is motivated to develop a model of outreach ministry to revitalize a Black urban church.

Special thanks to Professor Cornish Rogers who chaired this committee and was very encouraging with his comments; and Professor Dan Rhoades, who helped me tremendously by having me rewrite as a means of improving and conveying my thoughts. Between them is much wisdom, concern, and Christian love. Also, special appreciation to Ivan Leigh Warden, a good friend and servant of the Lord; and Gloria A. Johnson, for her invaluable support.

This work is a work of faith. While many may consider it an exercise in theology, this writer sees it as an event made ready to come alive in your church and your neighbor's church.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

My ministry in the Black church began out of a desire to be the best I can be in leading people to Jesus Christ. This desire stemmed from observations made in churches I pastored, where members demonstrated a lack of enthusiasm for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach.

These observations grew out of a structured first career as an industrial designer for a consulting engineering firm. Due to job schedules and deadlines, a concerted effort had to be maintained in the work place to meet the rigours of supply and demand. I saw the dynamics of the work place--people working together in concert--as a necessary catalytic ingredient needed in the life of the church in order to lead people to Jesus Christ prior to His imminent return.

Such a magnetic endeavor is needed if church members are to impact a people, a community, considered different due to an assumed deficiency in their outward showing of desire for Jesus Christ with regard to His love and mission for others.

Embracing the activity of the secular workplace with my love for ministry, my view of the church and its mission in the community is based on observations made and experiences shared in churches I have served. Emphasis is given to the latter--two originally White United Methodist churches, one in Pasadena, the other in Los Angeles, California. Both are now urban and Black, yet different from one another. Stronger

focus is on the latter.

Underlying the above dynamic is a fundamental issue known as nominality. It is the primary disease which sprouts the symptoms of Christian inertia. More specifically, however, the basis of Christian inertia derives from the alienation of the concept of church, historically, for Black people by the main culture, into an assimilation concept of church. At one time there was no separation between secular and sacred for Black people (African Theology). In the Caribbean and in America, slave religion was an all-inclusive communal concept. With the migration of Blacks from the South toward better economic conditions elsewhere, the church was redefined in order for Blacks to fit a more Western worldview. But it was the decree of the main culture that "blacks were outside the realm of humanity, that blacks were animals and that their enslavement was best for them and for society as a whole... as whites try to 'integrate' blacks into their society."¹

Problem Addressed by the Project

This project seeks to address a major problem at Calvary United Methodist Church--a Black urban church--that is affecting its very existence. This writer observes a lack of enthusiasm for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. With a representative membership of 105 persons--90 percent female, 10 percent male, and a median age of 58 years--this church

¹James H. Cone, A Black Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1986), 13.

reflects a people that appear unable to tolerate the rigours of consistent outreach ministry. This assumption is based on their ages, physical body impairments, lack of incentive for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach, and a laity reluctant to be trained for such a ministry.

Located at 5268 West Adams Boulevard at Cloverdale Avenue in Los Angeles, it appears very problematic for this church to exist as a representative of its community without becoming involved in its community's affairs. In an area saturated with crime and drug abuse, changing demographics and high unemployment, this community of believers seems to also be suffering from a fear of growth and change within. As a result, they seem content on maintaining the status-quo.

Such contentment appears appropriate since older members, due to seniority and status in the community, tend to hold on to the reins of leadership--a sign of authority in the Black church--even though they are not adequately trained for such positions. And though ministry guidelines have been developed by the denomination, on my arrival, there were no active ongoing ministries in place except for an adult class and a children's Sunday School class conducted by a senior member.

Dialogue with members revealed that this church was content existing on the memory of its previous community. But by the mid-sixties, with Black urban growth and Whites relocating to the suburbs (taking all financial resources with them), the burden of leadership fell on a Black community with a White

absentee landlord.

This situation affected the socio-economic condition of the community and the spiritual well-being of the church. The trained laity moved to the suburbs, adversely affecting the financial stability of the church and the local community. Yet, in spite of their past history, members were satisfied to embrace a form of ministry geared at maintaining a physical presence rather than striving to become an invaluable resource in a community that continues to change demographically.

Importance of the Problem

The purview of this church seems unrealistic and its goals deficient since The Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) mandates a church to communicate the Good News of the gospel by reaching out to others in their life settings, persuading them to accept Jesus Christ, and to serve Him in fellowship.

The relevance of the project to professional leadership is based on the desire and commitment of the pastor to equip the membership to demonstrate enthusiasm for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. So while the desire to make disciples is paramount in the church, without its resulting concomitants--baptism and teaching--the desire to make disciples would be one-sided and perhaps unreal.

This project also seeks to remind the church of its role as a resource group mandated to implement programs addressing socio-economic problems that impact the community, based on a statement of Social Principles in The Book of Discipline of

The United Methodist Church.²

The role of the church as a resource group addressing socio-economic problems has been the backbone of the Black church. With its visibility came a Black community ready to work together to meet the needs of other Blacks. This was normal because Blacks, though oppressed, never forgot their community. "The survival of Blacks necessitated a place that was private and sacred; where White ideals were peripheral" writes Gloria A. Johnson. She continues:

The Black church became that arena; it was a place for nurture and healing, for venting frustrations and for plotting routes of escape. It was a place for giving praise to the Almighty and for instilling hope. It was a place where African Americans could envision freedom and wholeness.³

It also becomes the responsibility of the pastor as local leader to do everything possible, with the assistance of the District Superintendent and other conference agencies of the denomination, to implement guidelines within the church geared at making these Social Principles a reality.

Also, based on the connectional principle of the denomi-

²United Methodist Church, The Book of Discipline, ed. Ronald P. Patterson (Nashville: United Methodist Publishing House, 1988), 91-111. Part III of The Book of Discipline states that the Social Principles and Social Creed of the denomination should be emphasized frequently in Sunday worship.

³Gloria A. Johnson, "Toward a Redefining of Pathology Within the Black Family." Paper presented for the course "Marriage and Family Counseling," School of Theology at Claremont, Calif., 1990, p. 8.

nation⁴--a people of faith journeying together in connection and in covenant with one another--the cabinet of the Annual Conference, Bishop and District Superintendents, should review churches based on demography and annual church reports. Such reviews can serve as a barometer to measure relationships between church and community, and to aid in developing strategies geared at effecting change and stimulating growth as needed.

Then, there is the itinerant system, the accepted method of clergy appointment to churches.⁵ This system has been under scrutiny by clergy and laity, and was the cause of much debate at the 1988 General Conference in St. Louis.⁶ It stands in need of a thorough critical analysis, due to its impact on the life of the church and its denominational polity. Studies reveal that churches which make significant impact in a community retain their pastors for at least ten years. So pastors appointed to small urban churches are concerned with the frequency of appointment which denies them quality time to implement effective fellowship and outreach programs.

⁴United Methodist Church, 116-18.

⁵United Methodist Church, par.437, 242-44.

⁶Donald E. Messer, "Whom Shall We Send? An Introduction to the Debate," in Send Me? The Itineracy in Crisis, ed. Donald E. Messer (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991) 13-22, introduces a debate of ordained clergy regarding the itinerant system where learned laity and clergy are asking to be heard and given a choice in the decision-making process.

Thesis

This project seeks to assess the effectiveness of reviving the membership of a particular Black urban church by bringing it into focus with the biblical commission (Matt. 28:19-20). The revival of this membership would emanate directly from a people reclaiming elements of their history and tradition, maintaining authenticity and integrity of who one is. Having reclaimed such, the implications are toward satisfying relationships with one another and with Jesus Christ. The church needs to experience seeing people come to Jesus Christ as a result of corporate and individual witness to the non-Christian world.⁷ The project also attempts to develop a revitalization strategy geared at addressing the needs of this church and of other Black urban churches that may be suffering from a similar malady. This strategy will alert a Black urban church of its mission and role as a community of believers and as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Definitions of Major Terms

Several terms used in this work are defined in order to convey their true meaning within the stated context.

The Great Commission: According to Matt. 28:19-20, after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, He appeared to His disciples and gave them a mandate to communicate the Good News of the

⁷James Montgomery Boice, God and History (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 177, reflects on Gene Getz's, Sharpening the Focus of the Church, p. 80, where Getz focuses on the health of the church and its vitality.

gospel. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" (NIV). Believers in Jesus Christ accept this as their primary responsibility as they witness to others, giving them an opportunity to accept Jesus Christ and ultimately serve Him in fellowship.

Christian Outreach: This is an act of assisting people by attempting to identify their needs, and understanding and assisting them in meeting these felt needs, while teaching them how to become committed servants of Jesus Christ.

Urban Church: In this context, it is defined as a group of people from various geographic areas, ethnicities, and cultures, in fellowship together in a city as believers in Jesus Christ, who strive to accomplish the mission of the church in a secular environment.

The Early Church: This term generally refers to the first century community of faith. However, in this context, it applies to Calvary and Grace United Methodist Churches, giving information about their histories from inception to the time of writing.

Work Previously Done in the Field

In search of works that address revitalization in the Black urban church, I found the work of Preston Robert Washington, God's Transforming Spirit: Black Church Renewal

and other works cited below very helpful. Washington focusses his work on the Black church seeking renewal and growth, and by his analysis comes closest to the study proposed by this work.⁸ He tells a renewal story of development and growth of a Black urban church, and gives information that can be helpful in the revitalizing of other urban churches.

Floyd Bartel developed a practical study for the Mennonite Church in A New Look at Church Growth, taking a critical look at their strategies of church growth, recognizing potential obstacles, and developing new avenues of growth suited for their congregational needs.⁹

In The Church Growth Handbook, William Easum, a United Methodist pastor, developed a work that reflects church growth principles.¹⁰ It allows a church to recognize its strengths and weaknesses, enabling members to correct their weaknesses and improve their strengths.

Studies done by Merle Edison Fish, Jr. and Thomas M. Pryor, although they span thirty-two years and seventeen years respectively, have investigated changes urban churches had to

⁸See Preston Robert Washington, God's Transforming Spirit: Black Church Renewal (Valley Forge: Judson, 1988), 11-17.

⁹Floyd G. Bartel, A New Look at Church Growth (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1979).

¹⁰William M. Easum, The Church Growth Handbook (Nashville: Abingdon, 1990).

make in order to cope with a changing urban demography.¹¹

Richard B. Wilke, a United Methodist bishop, takes a critical look at the future of The United Methodist Church. In And Are We Yet Alive? he uses his pastoral experiences to assert that the church needs to be revived in order to regain its vigor and rekindle growth.¹² He diagnoses the church, pinpoints its ailments, and outlines specific steps needed to be taken to realize restoration.

In spite of such invaluable resource, focus on the Black urban church--so broad in scope due to diversity in worship, style and polity within religious organizations--seems to evade most writers. Such an evasion may be due to the complexity of a people of color often considered homogeneous.

Therefore a lack of enthusiasm for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach by members so diverse can also be attributed to their physical characteristics, their socio-economic state, and their cultural differences. These are factors that can be overlooked in one's attempt to analyze the Black urban church.

This project intends to make its contribution to the field of revitalization of Black urban churches by drawing

¹¹Merle Edison Fish, Jr., "Adjustment of Large Downtown and Boulevard Churches in Los Angeles to Socio-Cultural Factors in the Community" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1959); and Thomas M. Pryor, ed., Urban Church Study (N.p., 1975).

¹²Richard B. Wilke, And Are We Yet Alive? (Nashville: Abingdon, 1986).

from experiences of works previously done, and integrating these with experiences gained by this writer in two Black urban United Methodist churches. Critical to the revitalizing process needed in the Black urban church is the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ is the gospel of the oppressed Black people. This gospel has been the catalytic force throughout the years of Black survival. And since the Black experience made its culture alive, it becomes a necessary ingredient in order that the Black urban church can reclaim the fervor that now reflects its history.

Grace United Methodist Church was experiencing membership decline due to changing demographics, high unemployment, and drug traffic. And although funds were available for qualified ethnic minority churches, programs designed to revive the membership and community outreach were not considered.

Calvary United Methodist Church, on the other hand, lacked a strong financial base. Coupled with a changing community and an elderly membership, this church was unable to endure the rigors of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach.

From resources used to implement change at these two churches, a strategy has been developed which is geared to the needs of one Black urban church, and also can be a vital source of information in assisting other Black urban churches in search of a revitalization strategy.

Scope and Limitation of the Project

This project seeks to address the existence and purpose of a Black urban church as a community of believers and its role in the urban setting. It looks at deficiencies of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach in a Black urban church and addresses clergy insensitivity to the needs of the church in its setting.

This writer diagnoses the ailments of Calvary United Methodist church over a specific period of time that led to its membership decline. Vital signs, ecologically and sociologically, are observed in order to arrest its ailments and recommend ways it can be nurtured to become healthy again.

The focus is to provoke needed enthusiasm for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach ministry by encouraging professing believers in Jesus Christ to adhere to their commitment to the mandate of The Great Commission. This communication of the Good News of the gospel through Christian fellowship and Christian outreach is the catalytic force considered relevant and necessary for change in today's urban setting.

This project seeks to encourage spiritual vitality in the Black urban church through worship practices and spiritual bonding within, which are indigenous to Black culture, and discusses efforts aimed at building bridges in a community that can aid in reclaiming the fervor that is now deficient. Yet, severe injustice would be done to readers by trying to cover all facets of Christian fellowship and Christian

outreach. Therefore, this writer will remain centered on the ecological and sociological factors that impact the Black urban church.

Procedure for Integration

The aim is to reflect on the early church as a body of believers united to the cause of its very existence and understanding of its purpose as stated in the Book of Acts. This writer views the Black urban church, among others, as a body of believers in Jesus Christ that is mandated by the task of The Great Commission here on earth.

The Great Commission is mandated in each of the gospels, as well as in the book of Acts. In Matthew, the emphasis is on the authority of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19-20). In Mark, emphasis is on final judgment (Mark 16:15-16). Luke's emphasis is on fulfilment of prophecy (Luke 24:45-47). In John, Christ gives the disciples their commission as His representatives (John 20:21). In Acts, Christ personalizes His command to the disciples to reach out to the entire world (Acts 1:8).

The project attempts to bridge these systematic biblical mandates with practical strategies geared at training clergy and laity to address concerns of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach as a means of reviving a Black urban church.

Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 presents an early theology of outreach looking

at early Methodism in America and strategies used to develop Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. Focus is on four key factors used in the expansion ministry program that positively impacted the Methodist movement. The objective is to draw from these observations, looking for patterns that can facilitate the culmination of a theology of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach in today's urban setting.

Chapter 3 introduces a case study of Grace United Methodist Church, Pasadena, California. It reflects a diagnostic perspective based on a demographic profile, used as a medium to analyze the church and community, and as a barometer to measure its vital signs after recognizing its ailments. The study reveals the attitudes of an urban Black church, once predominantly White, and the circumstances that have led to its present condition. Since the church is geographically located in the center of northwest Pasadena--an area that has experienced considerable change--the study addresses ways to restore credibility to the church and community.

Chapter 4 presents a second case study: a diagnosis of Calvary United Methodist Church, Los Angeles, California. The focus is on its vital signs--ecologically and sociologically--and an analysis of the church based on its previous historical records. The study reveals significant differences in factors that impact the well-being of this church as compared to its sister church in the Pasadena district.

Chapter 5 looks at a theology of outreach that recommends

a leadership plan designed for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach based on the findings of the preceding chapters. This plan relates some practical ways for a Black urban church to become involved in Christian fellowship and Christian outreach in its community.

Appendixes reveal a tabulated form and graph for both churches showing membership attendance. A copy of a Population Facts Full Data report sheet, prepared for Grace, also gives a numerical count of the population within a three-mile radius of the church. A map of Pasadena, showing population by race, locates Black concentration by census tracts within a one-mile radius of the church.

The plan reveals ways of understanding problems in the community and reflects ways to assist the church in bridging them. Also, strategies are designed to reclaim members who, for various reasons, have relocated to other parts of the city or have opted to stay at home for personal reasons.

Summary

In the Summary, entitled "What Can We Do?" candid considerations for Christian fellowship and outreach with which everyone can become involved within a church and its community (to accomplish meaningful relationships and harmony with others) are examined. How did early Methodists overcome ecological and sociological factors while maintaining an effective ministry on the early frontier? If then, why not now, considering the urban setting as the last frontier?

This writer envisages Christian fellowship in the Black urban church by the turn of the century as a spiritual dynamic, similar to the secular workplace, meeting the challenge of true Christian fellowship by equipping all--young and old--for the work of the ministry. And though diverse in culture, the Black urban church can accomplish its mission of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach to its community in order that all can come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

This writer sees Christian outreach as reaching out to others of different ethnicities and status, leading them to Jesus Christ by a demonstrative lifestyle, thus filling a void in the Black urban church and its community. This Christian fellowship and Christian outreach permits the advent of a spiritual paradigm shift yet to be accomplished on the religious horizon. This spiritual paradigm shift is dependent upon a re-integration of traditional values, though certainly not at this point an original historical value, but authentic values that are commensurate with who one is, shaped and refined by one's experiences as one passes through time.

This writer believes this observation is relevant considering the demographic changes within the city. Also, the need for unity and constructive planning among diverse groups is overdue. The church must reclaim the truthfulness of its purpose as a house of God with fellowship to all.

The terms unity and constructive planning are used to emphasize the fact that the church cannot be a true represen-

tation of Jesus Christ if clergy and laity are polarized; if one's integrity and one's task are polarized; and if one's church and one's community are polarized. Also, the church must resort to constructive planning. Where are we going? How do we plan to get there and who will lead us? I hope this study will be of invaluable assistance to churches striving to implement changes within and willing to impact their community by encouraging Christian fellowship and Christian outreach.

Chapter 2

An Early Church Theology of Outreach

Early Methodism in America

"No group prospered more in the West or seemed more providentially designed to capitalize on the conditions of the advancing American frontier than the Methodists," writes Sydney E. Ahlstrom.¹ Historical accounts of early Methodism in America attest to an almost universal front of revival, and even more continuous revivals, as these settlers embraced John Wesley's phraseology that the world was his parish.²

Beginning its American history in the latter part of the eighteenth century, Methodism began to invade the country in its outreach to a people who needed to hear of the saving grace of Jesus Christ.³ This need gave birth to the circuit

¹Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People, vol. 1 (New York: Image, 1975), 529.

²In a letter to James Hervey, Wesley states his principle on church law regarding one's preaching parish. He states, in part, "Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus...in whatever part of it I am I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty...." Emory Stevens Bucke, et al., eds., History of American Methodism, vol. 1. (New York: Abingdon, 1964), 18.

³The people needed to hear the gospel because, as Frederick Norwood states, "The formal church had failed to reach many of the people. There was a field ripe for harvest inside the Anglican establishment to say nothing of many others who, being dissenters or wholly outside any church, stood in need of spiritual ministry." See Norwood, The Story of American Methodism (Nashville: Abingdon, 1974), 54.

riders.⁴ This rationale allowed circuit preachers or circuit riders to be with the people, living with them, understanding them, and being there for them, thus becoming an integral part of community.

These were not intellectualized, seminary trained theologians. Rather, they were lay preachers with a special permit to preach the gospel, demonstrating a quality of life and commitment to service that was different from worship and ministry they knew in England prior to their journey to a new land.⁵ What the parent church failed to achieve in reaching out and teaching the people about their soul's salvation, was accomplished by the church in a new land as circuit riders embraced the new frontier.

An Early Methodist Church Principle

The new church was willing to be flexible with tradition and traditional values, allowing Wesley to amend the existing structure of the old church to meet the needs of the people.⁶ And circuit preachers were not static, maintaining culturally traditional forms, but were active in their quest to reach out. Kennon L. Callahan refers to static ministry, after

⁴See Kenneth S. Latourette, A History of Christianity, vol. 2., Reformation to the Present (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), 1039-40. See also Norwood, 54.

⁵Norwood relates that "the movement was planted in North America, not by Wesley's emissaries, but by freely operating lay preachers who had no license from Wesley at all." Norwood, 18.

⁶Norwood, 53.

World War II, as the professional minister movement where the church is considered the mission, rather than the community where the church existed. "Professional ministers are at their best in a churched culture. But put them in an unchurch-ed culture," he states, "and they are lost."⁷

This was not so in early Methodism. In spite of previous religious affiliation in Europe, circuit preachers were ready to make adjustments in order to lead a people to Jesus Christ without distorting the gospel message.⁸ Their purpose was to satisfy a spiritual hunger in the lower and middle classes by reaching out to them in their setting in spite of prevailing ecological or sociological factors.

George Whitefield's preaching excited coal miners in Bristol. John Wesley, aware of partiality in the mother church, reached the disfranchised poor in their domain. And through the urging of Whitefield, he "travelled widely, speaking wherever he could gain a hearing, in churches or out of doors...."⁹

Circuit preachers attracted the lower and middle classes by rekindling their faith.¹⁰ In fact, it could be safe to

⁷Kennon L. Callahan, Effective Church Leadership (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990), 3-8.

⁸Norwood, 18.

⁹Latourette, 1025-26.

¹⁰Latourette reflects on the dynamics of Whitefield's and Wesley's preaching. Though the lower and middle classes were considered religiously illiterate, they still had general or superficial knowledge of the main tenets of Christian teach-

imply that their strategy was to remove the stigma of a class /caste/upper echelon form of lifestyle and ministry exhibited by the intellectually affluent, by revealing that "grace for all" was not contingent on one's status in a community but by one's desire to demonstrate and communicate the love of Jesus Christ to all. This was done by reaching out to everyone, leading them to that saving grace that Jesus Christ offers.

Methodism prospered most on the American frontier due to four key factors of expansion. The circuit and preaching stations became the primary institutions of the regions. Second was the meticulous planning and allocation of camp meetings to meet the needs of social and religious impulses of the people. Third, recruitment of preachers came from among the common people through simple Christian messages in informal settings. And fourth, the preaching of Wesleyan theology was considered a major factor in the Methodist explosion.¹¹

Methodism Today: A Changing Phenomenon?

But at the close of the twentieth century, Methodism's strategy of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach seems to be in jeopardy primarily due to the changing demographic profile of the city and a denomination that is out of touch with its communities.

For example, the city of Los Angeles has a new complex-

ing. This resulted in a hunger left unsatisfied by the formality of the church. The new form of preaching awakened a response in the masses (p. 1026).

¹¹Ahlstrom, 529-32.

ion, housing people comprising almost every ethnic group and culture, making it one of the most cosmopolitan cities of our time. This writer views this urban metropolis where the challenge of mission outreach has come home to roost as the last frontier. Churches have yet to embrace this fact.

Two case studies of United Methodist churches are given, one in Chapter 3 and one in Chapter 4, in an attempt to communicate the state of the urban church that appears to be eluding the minds of the church leadership. These studies will reveal a shift in the face of Methodism that is not consistent with the desires of the founding fathers.

For example, Wilke sees this changing phenomenon as one where the church is out of focus with its purposes for ministry. He states that the church is in crisis, losing its influence and its members. He sees it as a people who are sick unto death by stating:

Once we were a Wesleyan revival, full of enthusiasm, fired by the Spirit, running the race set before us like a sprinter trying to win the prize.... Circuit riders raced over hill and valley. New churches were established in every hamlet. Our missionaries encircled the globe. Now we are tired, listless, fueled only by nostalgia of former days, walking with a droop, eyes on the ground, discouraged, putting one foot ahead of the other like a tired old man who remembers, but who can no longer perform.¹²

This observation may reiterate the sentiments of many others like Wilke, who sees a denomination that is out of focus with its mission; and out of touch with its communities; one that

¹²Wilke, 9.

needs to stop and take inventory of itself.

Back in early Methodism, Joseph Cook, Boston lecturer and preacher declared, "If America is ever ruined, the Methodist Church will be to blame. For she is the strongest and most influential Church on the continent of America today."¹³

That sentiment appears to have evaded the minds of the Methodist leadership. And although the physical decline of urban area churches has been addressed, leadership continues to practice a "nothing is happening" attitude by maintaining a professional minister's attitude, striving to maintain a presence rather than embrace a missional attitude. This attitude reveals that Methodism has moved up the ladder, from the poor to the middle class.

This writer sees history and tradition as primary ingredients in achieving wholeness in the church. The denominational structure needs to re-focus its vision and re-embrace the desires of the founding fathers by bringing again to life the motif of John Wesley, as he embraced both the world and the parish. The Black urban church and the community--with assistance from the denomination's leaders, history and tradition--can come alive again rather than hearing fine orations at Annual Conferences urging togetherness with no meaningful effort made to realize it.

What is lacking is a desire to establish solidarity and

¹³Hunter D. Farish, The Circuit Rider Dismounts (1938; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), 1, quoted in Ahlstrom, 171.

commonality in order to accomplish the mandate of The Great Commission. So case studies of Grace United Methodist Church, Pasadena, and Calvary United Methodist Church, Los Angeles were done by this writer to address a need that was non-existent. These studies give accounts, pinpointing problems, analyzing them, and recommending ways to restore spirituality to the church and meaningful relationships in the community.

Chapter 3

Grace United Methodist Church: A Case Study

Church Setting and Cultural Context

Grace United Methodist Church, 119 East Washington Boulevard, Pasadena, California at the corner of Iowa Street and Washington Boulevard is situated two blocks east of the Washington Boulevard/Fair Oaks intersection. On the southwest corner sits King's Village, a mid-sixties, government subsidized low-income housing complex. Opposite King's Village to the north sits a small shopping center, a drugstore, and a laundromat. The northeastern corner is the home of La Pintaresca Park and the public library. South of the park and the library, on the southeastern corner and south of a few homes and an industrial complex, sits the Jackie Robinson Center and the Post Office.

Despite restoration of La Pintaresca Park and the public library (by the City of Pasadena), some public buildings, and a few private homes restored under the direction of the Pasadena Historical Society--projects done in an attempt to enhance the community--Grace sits in an area seen by some as a hostile neighborhood. Others see this area as one that is ready for an evangelical awakening.

The neighborhood is comprised of middle-class private homes and multi-family rental units. Tree-lined streets, reminiscent of the work of many of the early settlers, are still maintained. Significant to the community and one block

north of Grace sits Washington School. Once an elementary and junior high, it is now used as an elementary school and chiropractic college. North of Grace is a church-owned property used to house students from Fuller Theological Seminary who assist at missional outreach in the community. Overshadowing these places of learning and community development, and within a one-half mile radius of the Washington Boulevard/Fair Oaks intersection, is the home of Pasadena's drug traffic. This area represents one of the highest drug and crime traffic areas in Los Angeles County and the country.

In a study by Randy Roberts, he states, "In the last three years, Pasadena police seized over 100 million dollars in narcotics (street value) and over one million dollars in cash. Of the 32 murders in Pasadena in 1985, the vast majority were drug related,"¹ which can be traced to the cultural change of the community. An excerpt from Community Profile, a Pasadena-Altadena demographic profile prepared for Youth Violence Prevention Roundtable in 1984, states:

Between the years 1960 and 1980, the City of Pasadena experienced significant changes in its demographic profile. The White population decreased, both in percentage terms and absolute numbers, while minority population increases ranged from 68% in the Black community to 319% in the Hispanic community.²

¹Taken from Randy Roberts' unpublished study, "Church Growth and World Evangelism," Fuller Theological Seminary, School of World Mission, Pasadena, Calif., 1986, p. 2, as he looks at the result of the demographic shift.

²Pasadena-Altadena Area Demographic Profile, prepared for Youth Violence Roundtable, Pasadena/Altadena [Calif.], United Way, 1985, p. 2.

The neighborhood of Grace alone reflects about 75 percent Black and 15 percent Hispanic, with a mixture of other ethnic groups comprising 10 percent. For comparison, in 1960, all northwest Pasadena was 54.6 percent White, 39 percent Black, and 6.4 percent other. But over the past thirty years, this neighborhood has changed dramatically.

Church History

Known in early years as Monk Hill Methodist Church, then later as Washington Street Methodist Church, Grace is facing a test regarding its existence and purpose in the center of northwest Pasadena. Since its birth on September 17, 1888 this northwest community has developed around it, growing from a quiet suburb in its early years, into today's urban melting pot--a conglomerate of cultures and traditions. A report of the First Quarterly Conference of the Church states:

The statistics of this first year's work in this then sparsely settled suburb of Pasadena, which was one of the greatest booms in the history of the country had led Methodism to set apart as the Pasadena District, something of the energy and efficiency of the first pastor, Rev. W. Arter Wright.³

Its mere location in the suburb had set it apart from the rest of the community. Geographic boundaries, establishing city limits and designed by the local governing authorities, gave carte blanche, full discretionary power, to this indigenous group. As a result, people of less means and of color

³Taken from A. J. Hockett's unpublished account of "Washington Street Church: A History," Pasadena, Calif., 1952, p. 1.

different from White were denied opportunity to become part of any fellowship and worship that was experienced in this community or within its facility.

Such a neglect of fellowship and worship was evidenced later by the willingness of the founding fathers and governing denominational body to approve the building of another facility (in order to justify their cause) outside this rural area, for others of same denominational belief, but of different ethnicity. To this fact, Hockett's report further states:

The reason for building a new church was that the church at Iowa and Washington Street was not large enough for our Sunday School, the property was in need of repair, and the Pasadena Council of the Methodist Episcopal Churches, backed by several prominent Methodist laymen, decided that Scott Chapel, a church for negroes, and the Washington Street Church be built at the same time.⁴

This church for negroes, Scott United Methodist church, still exists today. So, cultural boundries were designed in order to maintain the status quo and as a result of this modern day Beverly Hills-like community, the church blossomed primarily because it maintained its cultural homogeneity.

However, the complexion of the membership at Grace began to change in the early 1950s when five Hispanic families and one Black family were taken into fellowship. At this point in the life of the church, it was proof that the community had begun to experience integration. Records indicate a decline in membership from 440 to under 300 by 1964. Yet, the church

⁴Hockett, p. 6.

was still 90 percent White, mostly with elderly members.

Then a merger took place. The Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church agreed to merge Grace with Lincoln Avenue United Methodist Church, a small Black congregation about two miles away. The Lincoln Avenue building was sold to the Los Angeles Historical Society, and the land to the U.S. Postal Service. Systematic membership decline followed.

After the merger, church records revealed White members systematically left this church or transferred their membership to a predominantly White sister church. Something had to be done to reverse this situation because the history of Grace revealed that the dreams and aspirations of the founding fathers had lost their effervescence.

Church members continued to attend church services and activities out of a sense of habit and tradition. Most of the church members wanted to conduct their religious lives in ways that did not lend to viable Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. Committee meetings could be characterized as social gatherings because these meetings did not resolve in activities to enhance the church nor the community.

Although proceeds from the sale of the property were in the coffers of Grace and financial resources were available for Christian outreach, pastors (prior to my appointment) were unable to reverse the declining membership trend or to accent enthusiasm for meaningful change. The characteristics and dynamics of this church (nominality), describe and fit a

number of churches (across the board) in different socio-economic areas rather than just in the urban setting.

Defining the Problem

To clearly understand the concept of nominality and its impact, definitions given by some leading authorities on the subject are examined. The Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization states, "A nominal Protestant Christian is one who, within the Protestant tradition, would call himself a Christian, or be so regarded by others, but who has no authentic commitment to Christ based on personal faith...."⁵

C. Peter Wagner, an authority on church growth, brings an observation that is tangential to the nominality at Grace. In his book, Your Church Can Be Healthy, he states:

The underlying problem of St. John's Syndrome is nominality. When Christians become Christians in name only, when they feel their faith is only routine, when Church involvement is largely going through the motions...belonging is a matter of family tradition and social nicety.⁶

Eddie Gibbs believes Christians are yet to subject themselves under the lordship of Jesus Christ. He states:

Nominal Christians are Christians in name only. They are lapsed first-generation Christians; or second, third or fourth generation Christians without a personal experience of God's saving grace. They are associated with the church largely for reasons of historical association or cultural conformity rather

⁵Consultation on World Evangelization, The Thailand Report on Christian Witness to Nominal Christians Among Protestants (Wheaton, Ill.: Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization, 1980), 5.

⁶C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy (Nashville: Abingdon, 1979), 112.

than personal commitment.⁷

While these three points of view clearly define the problem of nominality, some additional points of view are observed because to capsule them would tend to suggest that to be a nominal Christian is not being a Christian at all. In fact, anyone whose behavior is not conducive to the biblical mandate and Christian living should not be termed nominal but should be recognized as non-Christian.

In reflecting on nominality in the Church this writer reviewed Bonhoeffer's early theology about the Christian community as witness. Clifford J. Green, on The Sociality of Christ and Humanity: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927 - 1933, writes,

The whole argument of *Sanctorum Communio* (Communion of Saints) is built around the Christian concept of person.... Furthermore, it is the concept of person which Bonhoeffer uses to achieve his goal of establishing a Christian social philosophy in place of the idealist philosophy of immanent Geist (spirit).⁸

Since the church does not exist solely to satisfy the interest of its members, Bonhoeffer is correct to recognize the concept of "person" as corporate as well as individual.⁹ It is from person viewed in this manner that the church sees

⁷Eddie Gibbs, I Believe in Church Growth (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1981), 223-24.

⁸Clifford J. Green, The Sociality of Christ and Humanity: Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Early Theology, 1927 - 1933 (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars, 1972), 61.

⁹Clifford Green, 61.

other people come to a knowledge and saving grace of Jesus Christ.

Perhaps a biblical definition of the term "nominality" would strengthen the position taken by this writer. C. Norman Kraus in his book, The Authentic Witness, writes,

A teacher or rabbi in the first century was more than the supervisor or teacher of today's classroom. He was a person of great authority because he was considered a master, a model of excellence. His attainment through disciplined study entitled him to be an example and guide. His disciples studied his style as well as the subject matter in which he excelled, and they did this by literally following and copying him.¹⁰

Those who accepted Jesus as the Christ were called His disciples, therefore this writer interprets the term "disciple" to mean one who has been taught or has been influenced by the lifestyle of a person that individual is willing to emulate. Kraus further states:

A disciple is an apprentice--one who learns by following, watching, absorbing the style as well as the intellectual system of the master. Disciples discipline themselves to understand and respond to life in a style that is authentic to the master.¹¹

So to be a disciple could mean much more, in Western thought, than the idea of just being a pupil or student. It requires a disciplined life that reflects the master in the student or disciple.

Therefore, in this context, the call to discipleship

¹⁰C. Norman Kraus, The Authentic Witness (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 17.

¹¹Kraus, 18.

extended by Jesus is to go and make disciples. It means teach and model the faith as Jesus has taught, and a new or renewed community will be called into existence.

"Community," then could be defined as a group of people that are dependent on one another and their relationships are mutual. It projects a people that embraces the needs of the world as their needs, wanting for themselves and the world the same thing. So John's statement in John 1, that the word became flesh, is a dynamic factor in the process of making disciples.

Then, incarnational ministry happens when Christians identify with the context in which Jesus has called them to shine (Matt. 5:16). Incarnational witnessing mandates an interaction with people where they are and building them up into Christ's character of right thinking and doing.

The apostle Paul affirms in his letter to the Ephesians that there can be no separation between Word and deed ministry. Therefore, people who accepted Jesus Christ, but are not learning daily (Acts 2:41-47) and are not seeking to practice His belief system cannot, in the biblical sense, be considered disciples.

Hence, "nominality" is a healthy term to identify authentic disciples. Fruit inspector, yes; judging the motives, no.

The Origin of Nominality

Nominality began when Grace was organized. Records reveal that in its formative years, members worked together

for the benefit of all.¹² In other words, for a church to be successful in any endeavour, there must be unity--unity within diversity.

Here was a growing, thriving community, that allowed their lives to be reflective of their faith and belief. This was not just a physical exercise to demonstrate what could be done. Here were a people who felt that if they worked together, for the benefit of all, God would bless their efforts.

But through the ensuing years this community began to embrace a new complexion. This then "sparsely settled suburb of Pasadena" began to transform itself into a melting pot which today is the home of almost every nationality in God's creation. These new residents created problems among the affluent.

This homogeneous group was experiencing difficulty accepting a people, considered a minority, increasing in physical numbers, and seen as a threat to everything they had accomplished. So when cultural change was inevitable they ran away, proving that they were no better Christians then, than they are now. And as a result, racism, in its most subtle form overshadowed this community when many relocated to more exclusive areas like Sierra Madre and San Marino, in order to maintain their indigenous lifestyle. Others settled for the

¹²Huckett states, "The church with its lovely and exquisite mountain scenery surrounded with beautiful shrubs and flowers and beautiful interior was the consummation of a long and faithful service by both pastors and people covering a period of sixteen years (p. 2).

only home they could afford--northwest Pasadena.

Recognizing Nominality

Grace Church and its intra-structure remained unchanged while its doors were opened to this new community. And since so much effort was channeled into it the leadership became virtually absentee landlords. They were visible to maintain control of the physical plant while their desire for Christian outreach and community network diminished.

Nominality surfaced because the leadership restricted basic church growth principles. Their intentional approach was leading to the demise of the church and the beginning of nominality in its most subtle form. This church was dying because programs were not implemented to equip the saints for the work of the ministry in its new culturally diversified state. Nothing new was happening.

This church no longer represented the community, but reflected a leadership group that had envisioned its future and were resolute to maintain a managerial role as long as they could. This kind of leadership is reminiscent of the slave/master relationship where White slave masters demonstrated a paternalistic attitude towards Blacks who were considered "things" by trying to fit them into the White mainstream. To this James Cone states:

Under the banner of liberalism (compounded of white guilt and black naivety), "integration" became the watchword....the destruction of black identity through assimilation. Whites wanted to integrate blacks into white society--straight hair, neckties, deodorant, the whole package--as if blacks had no

existence apart from whiteness.¹³

The concept of urban ministry and community services had yet to come into focus in their ministerial mind's eyes. This church awakened at dawn to a realization it had not anticipated. It lacked the vision that "all the nations" (Matt. 28:19) was becoming an integral part of their lifestyle and had begun integrating into their community as "all being one" in Jesus Christ.

So this church went from mission to maintainance. Monies were invested to survive and increase its treasury--not for missional outreach, but for longevity. Then some leaders (due to advanced age) relinquished offices held for years, giving Black members token leadership positions.

But many new Black members were naive of their leadership roles in spite of their titles. Many "grabbed the whip instead of the reins" which gave them a feeling of authority.¹⁴ Realistically, these new leaders made it difficult for others of their own kind. For many leaders in the Black church today, this authoritarian style of leadership is pervasive. This style reflects the denial of roles in the dominant culture, through an oppressive system, which gives

¹³Cone, 13.

¹⁴See Floyd Massey, Jr. and Samuel Berry McKinney, Church Administration in the Black Perspective (Valley Forge: Judson, 1976), 11, who attest that Blacks from slavery to the present were subject to White authority and, historically the Black church is the only institution that Black people control free of White domination.

rise to nominalism.

So while new members (with a burning desire to serve and equip others for ministry) were accepted into this church family, they were intimidated by these new leaders whose tendency was to hold on to the whip. After a while new members stayed home, becoming visible for special celebrations at the church, or they remained visible but did nothing.

Impact of Nominality

By the mid-sixties, this church was in terrible decline due to the exodus of Whites from the community and the reflective growth of the Black and Hispanic community. No one in its leadership was able to minister to the new community since such a change was not anticipated, and none were prepared due to cultural diversity. The White leadership was content maintaining control of the physical plant, and new Black members were just happy to be placed in office.

Then help came. Retiring missionaries returned home and were housed within close proximity to the church. They made Grace their church home. They attempted to restore credibility to the church by attempting to "make the dry bones live again." They assumed leadership roles and gave of their time, their talent, and their treasure.

And though their endeavors were honorable, nominality still permeated the membership. Black members in office began to measure their inability to lead by the superior ability of the trained missionaries. As one member shared, "They can do

everything. They seem to know just what to do at the right time, and that makes me feel terrible. They make me know how much I do not know." But this effort ended when the entire group was relocated to another home in the San Diego area. Only then did the full impact of nominality hit home.

Result of Nominality

In 1986, this writer was appointed as the first Black pastor of Grace. My primary concern was to develop a strategy aimed at correcting problems that plagued it. A social line divided this Black church and its community. Those of means in the church resented the less fortunate in subtle ways.

Critical to the life of such a church is the pastoral leadership. In most cases, a church like Grace is viewed as a training ground for trainee-pastors, fresh from seminary, and yearning for a pastoral charge. The conference made these assignments knowing that the pastor lacked leadership skills and the church, in most cases (after White members left) had minimal financial resources to implement effective programming, hindering growth. Yet that pastor was expected to be a complete problem solver.

And although preceding pastors, through the Commission on Ethnic Ministries of the Pacific Conference, had access to resources for Christian outreach, Grace did not embrace the opportunity to make disciples nor to equip the saints for the work of the ministry due to ill-equipped leadership.

Also, this church was not supportive of its previous

pastor. "There are very few who volunteer in this church," writes Andy Welch. In a confidential letter, my predecessor who served for two years further stated:

Grace church people deeply desire strong "take charge" leadership. Just over six months after I arrived, one member sat me down and said, "Tell us clearly what you want us to do." Of course, they won't necessarily do it, but that's what they seem to want. I could not give them that kind of leadership. I hope you can.... I was lousy at delegating, and wound up doing many, many tasks someone else should have done.¹⁵

The church maintained an imagery in the community, thriving on its past track record while failing to recognize its impending demise. Here was a church that failed to identify itself with its culture and its community. Here were a people placing tenure and self before the work of Jesus Christ.

Grace failed to accept spiritual leadership. Kenneth J. Kilinski and Jerry C. Wofford, in Organization and Leadership in the Local Church, state that the primary task of church leaders is to build the body of Christ. Reflecting on its purposes, and the fulfillment of these purposes, they affirm: "The scriptural church is an organism rather than an organization; it is a community rather than an institution."¹⁶

So by the time this writer was appointed in 1986 to

¹⁵Andy Welch is a White pastor who, in his letter, expressed concerns to me that he did not feel comfortable at Grace because he was not experienced in Black culture and was intimidated by the Black leadership.

¹⁶Kenneth K. Kilinski and Jerry C. Wofford, Organization and Leadership in the Local Church (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1973), 133.

shepherd the flock of God at Grace, its membership had plummeted to under 30 members at Sunday worship. Statistical information from the Annual Conference journals reflect:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHILDREN</u> birth-6th	<u>YOUTH</u> 7th-12th	<u>ADULTS</u> post High	<u>TOTAL</u> in Church School
1990	19	5	30	64
1989	10	16	5	30
1988	8	13	3	27
1987	7	3	22	37
1986	20	-	12	36

At meetings with the church committee, they made it clear what my limitations were to be in administration and worship, noted that I was to attend committee meetings, and instructed me to maintain the church's one-hour service format.

Such rigidity by leaders who called the shots was the primary reason for quality leadership to take a back seat. The ineptitude of the leadership was reflected to this community through the lack of care for the property entrusted to this church. The building was in disrepair. Officers responsible for such tasks were men and women who, by reason of age, were unable to perform their responsibilities as the discipline of the church mandates.

Nominality crippled the church spiritually and physically. Therefore a medication had to be administered in order to restore health to this church.

Solving the Problem of Nominality

In spite of problems that plagued this church and its barrenness to ministry and service, this writer feasted on the challenge God gave to the prophet Ezekiel in the Valley of Dry

Bones, seeing a similar situation at Grace. It was important that a methodical approach be adopted to equip the saints for ministry.

This writer realized that in order for a church to be viable in its community, it has to die to its old self and begin anew--with new ideals and visions. Too frequently, older church members, considered to be the first group of Blacks to impact transition in a White church, continue to embrace the myth of what that church once represented.

They embrace stories from their predecessors during anniversary celebrations and claim these stories as their own. And while their demise is imminent, they will refuse to come together and make their story legitimate. James F. Hopewell, in his book Congregation: Stories and Structures shares his concern that "They are paralyzed in prosaic self-description that follows depressingly predictable lines. They evaluate themselves by counting money, membership, and programs.... They even equate themselves with the property they occupy."¹⁷

The ensuing struggle takes place when a leader with a vision accepts the challenge to revitalize such a church, but the membership chooses to keep their visionary blinders on, unable to envision the need for change in times that require change. A pastor/leader must re-orient the course of the church by calling the local church leaders to accountability.

¹⁷James F. Hopewell, Congregation: Stories and Structures (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 140.

Plus, he/she must be able to get full support from the denominational leaders if any change is to take place.

The need for support from the leaders is crucial since some members will resist change and will use their status and office to change the minds of clergy superiors. For example, when this writer recommended to the church conference that a member should be removed from office for lack of participation in church and poor attendance at meetings, the response was that the member in question was one of the pillars of the church and moving him was denied at church conference.

However, during my first six months, focus was on the operation of the total church: studying its history, monitoring all called meetings (which were new to officers), meeting members one-on-one to understand their felt needs, and establishing personal relationships.

The latter part of my first year was spent meeting with committees and concerned individuals in order to ensure that everyone was aware of their role within the church. By the end of my first year, members began demonstrating a different attitude. Some left the church when they realized we were striving to function as an organism. Others, excited about this strategy, grew more confident in their offices. Soon the church began to show signs of life.

Almost simultaneous with the committee meetings, a Wednesday night Bible study group was started. A request for all chairpersons to attend was made so they could understand

their roles from a biblical perspective and provoke an awareness that they were not just a people but that the church is God's people. Not many complied.

In my second year the issue of nominality was addressed by the Administrative Council, the governing body of the local church, at a weekend retreat away from the church setting. Church officers felt it was time to involve everyone by reflecting on goals and objectives. After much discussion, the issue of nominality took center stage. True to my suspicions, it was the belief of many that a few members controlled the operations of the church. "We need to support our claims of being Christian by our attitude," one member suggested.

This suggestion made it clear in my mind that Black traditional values were not forgotten, but were just laying dormant. It brought to my realization that the unity of church and community could be revived if the membership was willing to accept one another in mutual relationships. Unlike other meetings, such openness of feelings and attitudes was experienced that by the last session of the day, strategies were developed geared at church renewal.

We headed back to Pasadena with a new vision of mission and outreach. A member made a banner reflecting our efforts. It read, "Dare to Dream, Dare to Love, Dare to Act." This vision was embraced by the membership. And although support was slow, the core group did not relent.

Priority was placed in four areas: evangelism, youth and young adult, tutoring, and family ministries. The Evangelism committee paved the way by organizing a prayer vigil as a support group for others. They called on absent members and visited frequently. They listened to others, they encouraged, they supported.

Twelve young adults shared their dreams and were assured full support. They began serving as liturgists and participated in worship service every third Sunday of the month. A Bible study came into being, then a choir. The youth were no longer treated as children whom the adults knew before they were born, but were recognized as young adult Christians.

A tutoring program began for the community youth, designed to reach children needing remedial help with their regular class work. This was a priority since many parents were generational welfare recipients or drug users. (It is amazing how some could be so close to the church, yet so far from God.) With assistance from other agencies, this program developed into an independent outreach ministry. And though students from Fuller Theological Seminary nearby were primary tutors, members of Grace were intended for this work.

Family ministries began with its focus on building relationships within the church. This was the slowest area to take hold. Members were apprehensive to share feelings and emotions with others. Events designed to strengthen and to create bonding were developed, but never fully implemented.

During this second year, membership grew to 82. Grace was encouraged when young people, full of enthusiasm and anxious to serve, expressed their desire to become a part of the church family. This situation allowed the church to reinforce some committees and reshape others. Most important, after personal discussion with some nominal members, they decided to get involved.

In their preparation for service, denominational guidelines were reviewed. At meetings, punctuality and adherence to the agenda was requested. This pleased many since times set to convene and adjourn were met.

Very soon, members were able to associate the administrative functions with the spiritual. At a meeting, a member shared the early biblical model of leadership which Moses administered after consultation with his father-in-law, Jethro (Exod. 18:13-27). This member explained the story, rededicated her life to Jesus Christ, and requested a more leading office. Why? She became aware of her talents as God-given and did not want to lose them. More importantly to note, however is that she was a nominal member.

Another area of ministry began to blossom when a Black choir director was employed. Music plays an integral part of worship in the Black church. During a musical celebration at Christmastime the choir was helped by talented non-members who were personal friends of this choir director. Given permission to sing regularly with the choir, this writer felt that

if we could demonstrate the life of a Christian, then time alone would be a factor in their conversion. Within three months, six persons from the choir became members--tithing members.

Attendance at Grace grew to 109, averaging 85 at worship service. (See Table 1, Graph 1.) As a result, Grace developed a target ministry geared at reaching out to the community. A Board of Directors was formed to initiate a new program called the "Grace Leadership Development Program."

Grace felt it was necessary to be the church of the people rather than be a church bounded by walls, murals, and stained glass windows. A true impact was not made because we could not address all their needs of the people. One thing is sure: while the church may still suffer from nominalism, the approach adopted at Grace brought a new dimension to the lives of those who were once nominal. To turn around, Grace had to look at its total situation, analyze it, then formulate a plan conducive to its life setting. It worked between 1986-1990.

Chapter 4

Calvary United Methodist Church: A Case Study

Introduction

Calvary United Methodist Church is facing a severe test regarding its very existence and purpose in the Los Angeles area. Located at 5268 West Adams Boulevard at Cloverdale Avenue, Calvary represented a White church serving a White community. This community worked well together in spite of trying times and difficult experiences.

Beginning their first Sunday worship service in a tent on April 8, 1922, ground was eventually broken in August of that year for a new building. By March 1, 1924, the building was completed, housing a membership of approximately 370 persons (a figure taken from the Fifty-Sixth Anniversary Program Report).

During the Great Depression, Rev. A. C. Meyers, in a written report dated March 22, 1931, stated: "This has been one of the most difficult years that I have experienced since I entered the Ministry.... We have held our own in nearly every department of the church and made some advancement in others." The Anniversary Program Report reveals even after World War II, with most of the men away, that the church managed to weather the storm, and by 1945 their indebtedness was paid and the mortgage documents burned--symbolic of their accomplishment.

However, over the years, this once thriving community has

taken on a demographic shift, like its sister church in the Pasadena District, that changed it as it embraced a number of ethnic groups, critically affecting the life of this church. This study analyzes the state of the church and its impact on its community in order to develop a revitalization program aimed at restoring credibility to both church and community.

The Problem of Calvary

Calvary represents a typical example of a church suffering from a terrible malady. In his book, Your Church Can Be Healthy, Wagner skillfully looks at the logistics of a church and compares it with the human anatomy. He sees the church in similar ways that a concerned mother sees her ailing child when that child appears to be "under the weather" due to a simple cold or some illness that requires expert medical attention. His observations assisted me in diagnosing the plight of Calvary.

On the eve of its seventieth birthday on April 8, 1992, after careful study, this writer discovered that Calvary is suffering from "Ethnikitis" and "Old Age."¹ These are very serious ailments for a church to contract and experience. In fact, these are terminal illnesses. Wagner, an authority on church growth further states, "Both old age and ethnikitis are

¹Wagner uses the word "Ethnikitis" to describe a terminal urban disease in churches he sees as a "local contextual factor." "Old Age" he describes as a rural disease that sets in a church when people move out and no one moves in. This writer interprets the phrase "no one moves in" to imply no one assuming the role of those who left. See Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, 29-42.

caused by 'local contextual factors,' or changing community conditions, that are due much more to sociological causes than to anything that happens or does not happen within the church itself."² The observances of Wagner are accurate. "The problem," he states, "usually revolves around a static church in a changing neighborhood."³

This statement is true, since little attention was given to this community since the personal lifestyle of church members was socially and culturally different from the majority of those who comprised this neighborhood. Wagner further states, "The church that gets ethnikititis was once a neighborhood church."⁴ Let us examine this truth.

The first terminal illness affecting Calvary is Ethnikititis. When significant others assume permanent residency in an homogeneous community, a disruption occurs. The latter relocate to another geographic area in order to maintain homogeneity. In his diagnosis Wagner states:

It was started among one basic kind of people, namely those who lived in the neighborhood. The church grew and often flourished because the people in the neighborhood were attracted to the church and its congregation. They were perceived as "our kind of people." Their language, their worship styles, their musical tastes, their social activities, and their personal life-style were compatible. Then an unanticipated and unprayed-for social phenomenon begins to occur. Other kinds of people begin moving into the neighborhood--just a few at first,

²See Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, 41.

³See Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, 30.

⁴See Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, 30.

then in greater numbers. They seem to enjoy the company of one another more than that of the people already living there. Some of their behavior is strange. It is harder to make friends with them. Their children don't get along too well with the children of the church members. Gradually church families begin moving out of the changing neighborhood and into new neighborhoods where their own life-styles are more generally accepted.⁵

While this exodus was occurring from the inner city, church members maintained allegiance to the church by holding key offices until they embraced another church to call their own.

During the closing years of the decade of the 1950s and continuing, this community began changing from White to Black and Hispanic. The General Population Characteristics of the 1960 Census Report reflected a general population increase of 25.8 percent from 1950 to 1960. The table below showing population growth for Whites, Blacks, and Others reveals the Black population grew almost 100 percent, other ethnic groups grew 56 percent, and Whites grew 69 percent.

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>WHITES</u>	<u>BLACKS</u>	<u>OTHERS</u>
1950	9,915,173	462,172	208,878
1960	14,455,230	883,861	378,113

Although the White population grew, the homogeneous church members did not remain in the inner city. This close-knit group moved to rural areas to maintain their lifestyle.

For example, the Annual Conference Journal of the United Methodist Church reveals that between 1966 and 1967, the year of white flight, the membership of Calvary declined from 450 members to 200. (See Table 2, Graph 2). The journal noted 224

⁵Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, 30.

removed by Quarterly Conference, 10 by death, 28 by transfer, and 12 new members added. Two hundred and sixty-two (262) persons ceased to be members of Calvary within a twelve month period.

Not counted in the statistics of the conference journal during those years were the children and unemployed young adults. It was the perception of the district superintendent that only giving and tithing members should be recorded. Twenty-four years later this church has not recovered from this decline.

"Toward the close of the 1950s and throughout the 1960s population patterns shifted and so did the membership of Calvary. The result was the decline in membership and activities. This is the period of testing for Calvary," states the Anniversary Program Report. The question asked was will they continue to serve as an edifice of God in the community?

Such a question focusses on the second terminal illness that impacted Calvary--Old Age, a term that must not be confused with the ages of church members. It is a malady that paralyzes the total community in terms of its physical and spiritual well being. Though everything appeared normal, polarity existed between residents. To this Wagner asserts:

Old Age...leads to a natural death.... It is similar to ethnikititis in that the conditions that cause it are beyond the control of church members, pastors, or even bishops....It will set in when people move out of an area, and no one moves in. The end result is not a new kind of people in an old neighborhood,

but no neighborhood at all.⁶

The difference between Wagner's observation and the situation in the Calvary community was that people did move in--the wrong people. A community existed reflecting a high percentage of Blacks and Hispanics. But, lack of genuine church leadership and community outreach to "the wrong people" signalled a lack of unity within diversity.

After its white flight, Calvary was not prepared to deal with a multi-ethnic community. This church continued to use denominational materials that stressed inclusiveness, yet remained insensitive to variations in cultural beliefs and norms of this new community. There were no newly published materials identifiable with any ethnic group. New Black members, except for clergy, were given leadership positions on boards and agencies without adequate training for the tasks they were to perform--a situation, in my opinion, that was diametrically opposite to standards set by the denomination and maintained by the White church.

It was not until 1958, when a Black pastor was assigned to Calvary, that any attempt was made to nurture this body of believers and recognize its cultural diversity and heritage. But as noted earlier, within eight years (by 1966) its membership plummeted. No significant growth patterns emerged.

A major problem that caused separation and division at Calvary was the disruption of community life with the con-

⁶Wagner, Your Church Can Be Healthy, 41-42.

struction of the Santa Monica Freeway. Members living on the north side of the freeway who were able to walk to church were suddenly cut off, disrupting their access. This divided the community, causing temporary isolation and, as members grew older, this isolation became permanent. So the Black church and community has always been disadvantaged, to which Massey and McKinney state:

In spite of many recent economic gains experienced in the black community, the black church constituency is comprised of the "organized poor," who lack financial resources and the power to change their condition. Nonetheless, community expectations require the church to meet the needs presented to them...."The perennial problem of the Black church is that of facing a large community with a myriad of problems and limited resources to resolve them. Those who administer the Lord's work in Black churches do so with meager means overpowered by overwhelming odds."⁷

The new administration was unable to equip this church for ministry in the Black context. The pastor sent was Black but the governing body remained White. Study materials used were insensitive to ethnic groups by generalizing lifestyles. Pastors were unable to establish tenure within a church and community due to the itinerant system. To reiterate the sentiments of Kilinski and Wofford, for a pastor to be effective in a community, tenure must be established in order to develop relationships and trust.

⁷Massey and McKinney, 10.

Paradigm Shift

Any church that is faced with such illnesses requires radical strategies to bring about change. Also, in order to revitalize a Black urban church, the burden rests on the desires of those privileged to embrace the mantle of leadership.

Leadership, in the Christian context, is the ability to equip people, bringing them together so that they can accomplish God's purpose for their lives. Such a leader is required to be intuitive in adjusting to situations as they may arise, to be skilled in the basic operations of the total church, and to be sensitive to a diverse people, being the equipping agent for spiritual change. Charles Tidwell, in Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry, states:

The reason for leadership and guidance in a church is to equip the church. To equip the church is to furnish it for service or action. To equip means to prepare, to dress, to array, to outfit....To equip is to furnish, to provide any or all essentials making for efficiency in action or use for performing a function. To equip the church is the natural, characteristic, essential action of church leadership. Such action is vital to the life of the organism, the church.⁸

Therefore, the task of leadership embraces three major areas: to provide efficient organizational management; to provide guidance for the total church; and to provide authentic spiritual direction. Lack of any of these components hinders the efficacy of the body.

⁸Charles A. Tidwell, Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry (Nashville: Broadman, 1985), 28.

How can this be done? Eleven pastors and thirty-two years later, this writer was appointed pastor of Calvary. There were no monthly reports (except for weekly financial statements) and no Annual Charge Conference Report on file for previous years. In fact, there were no records on file in the church office. It becomes difficult for any church to measure its success or its failure without accurate record keeping. There had to be a starting point. Statistical information from the Annual Conference journals reflect:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>CHILDREN</u> birth-6th	<u>YOUTH</u> 7th-12th	<u>ADULTS</u> post High	<u>TOTAL</u> in Church School
1992	7	13	15	40
1991	5	20	10	40
1990	5	20	10	38
1989	5	20	10	38
1988	5	20	10	10

Using the denomination's guidelines, this writer worked one-on-one with chairpersons and with committee members to ensure they understood their function, and with the laity to restore confidence in the work of the ministry. This was a change of routine telephone meetings with no written reports but it was also a realistic approach.

Calvary's church roll recorded a membership of 105 persons, 90 percent female and 10 percent male, and a median age of 58 years. Attendance during my first six months rarely averaged forty-five persons except on First Sundays of the month when Communion Service was celebrated. Then attendance rose to approximately seventy persons. This attendance trend reflected a people who were unable to tolerate the rigors of

consistent outreach ministry.

Chairpersons were requested to provide an agenda and a written report for committee meetings. It is impossible to know where you want to go when you do not know where you are. Reports were slow at the beginning, but eventually chairpersons recognized that unless they continued to follow their goals and objectives in a consistent manner, recognizing their peaks and valleys through monthly meetings and reports, they could not effectively chart their future.

Kilinski and Wofford believe goals of a church should be addressed through careful and systematic planning.

Churches have been anything but "faithful stewards" when it comes to proper management of time, money, and facilities used in the Lord's work. It is time that we make some optical corrections to overcome the malady of "administrative myopia." This correction can be made through a proper understanding of long-range planning.⁹

Through sermons on Sunday and regular mid-week Bible study, spiritual direction was reinforced allowing officers and members to be in dialogue on issues of concern, and to recognize ways to solve problems. Changes in attitudes were evidenced within my first year. Peter Drucker's definition of planning as used by Kilinski and Wofford pinpoints a need for its effective use as a means of solving problems.

Drucker's definition of planning sees it as the correct

⁹Kilinski and Wofford, 186.

way to deal with problems.¹⁰ And since objectives motivate people, the desire to develop a long-range plan for Calvary remained paramount on my mind. It is a process that involves proper understanding of faithful stewardship. Therefore, goals developed during the long-range planning had to be documented and executed.

My goal was total church renewal--the young, the elderly, the sick, and those who just stayed home. The church's membership directory was used to contact unknown members. A personal letter followed expressing my desire to meet with them to give assurance that they were just as important as anyone else.

This approach is important in a Black urban church where true reins of leadership begins with tenure. As a pastor from a third world country, adopted into Methodism, members had to be assured this writer was dependable.

Since members invested their authority and feelings in the leadership process, they expected a pastor to possess the qualities of a Moses, a Joshua, and to be like Paul because of his/her source of spiritual strength and intuition. To this Massey and McKinney agree on this point.

Moreover, the pastor's strength has been basic to sound governance of the corporate life of the congregation....He is required to walk a tightrope in the exercise of power and authority by leading the people with a sense that the power he utilizes

¹⁰Peter Drucker, "Management for Business Effectiveness," Harvard Business School Bulletin, May-June 1963, quoted in Kilinski and Wofford, 186.

was delegated to him under the watchful eye of the eternal God.¹¹

It cannot be overemphasized that in the Black church, leadership is important. But neither the leader nor the congregation should fail to recognize that results of church leadership are accredited to the working of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all people. Paul, in an attempt to free the church at Corinth from "partyism" reminded them, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6 KJV). Prior to his Ascension, Jesus Christ, reminded His apostles that the Holy Spirit will endow them with power to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8). Therefore, effective leadership must be under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit.

In Spiritual Leadership, John Sanders affirms, "Spiritual leadership is a blending of natural and spiritual qualities. Even the natural qualities are not self-produced but God-given, and therefore reach their highest effectiveness when employed in the service of God and for His glory."¹²

Summary

In my two-year term as pastor, a dividing line still exists between die-hards, content on maintaining the status quo, coming to the rescue as situations present themselves, and others willing to develop goals aimed at solving the needs of this church, both physically and spiritually.

¹¹Massey and McKinney, 36.

¹²John O. Sanders, Spiritual Leadership (Chicago: Moody, 1967), 20.

This writer equates church die-hards at Calvary to church members identified as "Well-Intentioned Dragons" by Marshall Shelley, in his book of the same name. "They are the ones who accuse you of being (pick one) too spiritual, not spiritual enough, too dominant, too laid back, too narrow, too loose, too structured, too disorganized, or ulterior in your motives. In his introduction, "Church or Lair," he shares:

Within the church, they are the sincere, well-meaning saints, but they leave ulcers, strained relationships, and hard feelings in their wake. They don't consider themselves difficult people. They don't sit up nights thinking of ways to be nasty. Often they are pillars of the community--talented, strong personalities, deservedly respected--but for some reason, they undermine the ministry of the church.¹³

My desire to be the best in soul winning also means endeavoring to change the stereotypical thinking of church die-hards by developing short-range programs built into long-range strategic planning of the church. Again Kilinski and Wofford concur:

Long-range planning is as important to a church as the thermostat is to a home; a thermostat controls the environment, whereas a thermometer simply records it. Seemingly, most churches simply live by a thermometer, recording the environmental changes around them and being controlled by them. What our churches desperately need today is a thermostat--the instrument that will determine the temperature and the environment. Long-range planning can be that thermostat, for through its effective application a church can act rather than react.¹⁴

¹³Marshall Shelley, Well-Intentioned Dragons (Carol Stream, Ill.: Word, 1985). Taken from liner notes.

¹⁴Kilinski and Wofford, 186-87.

A church must become the thermostat rather than a thermometer. When a problem emerges it is recognized, making it easier to arrive at a solution before it becomes a crisis. Therefore for Calvary, or a Black urban church, or any church at all to demonstrate Christian fellowship and Christian outreach, basic questions regarding its mission and its purpose in a community must be addressed and answered.

Chapter 5

A Theology of Outreach

Since theology is the discipline that discusses and interprets the meaning of revelation--the self disclosure of God and His love in Jesus Christ, in developing a theology of outreach, this writer's approach is that humankind gets its value from God, the creator, imputing worth to God's creatures.

Foundational to a theology of outreach is the paradigm of love in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (NIV). This is the starting point for a theology of outreach and of mission. The love of God and the work of the Holy Spirit must be the catalyst in a Black people to proclaim the agenda of the Great Commission in the their community.

Therefore, the call to discipleship (to teach and model the faith of Jesus) by an oppressed people in an oppressed community allows the personification of Jesus in that community to be inherent in that setting. Cone reinforces this observation by stating, "If Christ is truly the Suffering Servant of God who takes upon himself the suffering of his people, thereby reestablishing the covenant of God, then he must be black."¹

Recognizing the desire to be free from oppression, and

¹Cone, 122.

the belief in Jesus Christ as the freedom fighter, the Black Christ is romanticized, taking form in the midst of Black people. "The human being was not created to be a slave, and the appearance of God in Christ gives us the possibility of freedom," states Cone. He further states:

The black Christ is he who threatens the structure of evil as seen in white society, rebelling against it, thereby becoming the embodiment of what the black community knows that it must become. Because he has become black as we are, we now know what black empowerment is. It is blacks determining the way they are going to behave in the world....Black empowerment is the black community in defiance, knowing that he who has become one of them is far more important than threats from white officials.²

So, in response to God's love is a sense of gratitude that undergirds our response to His love. On this motif Pauline theology notes, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him?" (Rom. 8:32 RSV). Arguing from a greater to a lesser proposition is characteristic of Paul's writing. Note the pattern in Rom. 5: 8-9 that states "But God shows his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we are now justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God" (RSV).

Here the apostle starts with the greater and from that he then deduces the lesser. In other words, he is saying that if God has already done for us the greatest thing that even God could possibly do, how can God conceivably fail or refuse to

²Cone, 121.

do for us anything less than that! That is the argument. If God has already done the greatest thing of all for our salvation, then it is quite unthinkable that God should fail to continue to work in us until we are brought to the final goal of ultimate perfection and glorification.

It is therefore this writer's contention that a theology of outreach and/or mission springs from Christology. Alongside a sense of gratitude, is what Michael Green says is a sense of responsibility. Green states, "The note of personal responsibility and accountability before God the sovereign Judge was a prominent spur to evangelism in the early Church."³ In attempting to be active participants in building the Kingdom, can the servant put forth less effort than our Lord? To this question Paul states, "For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel! For if I do this of my own will, I have a reward; but if not of my own will, I am entrusted with a commission" (1 Cor. 9:16-17 RSV).

Closely related to the theology of love is a theology of hope. The servant community responds correctly to situations of hopelessness by giving a realistic view to which Jurgen Moltmann writes:

Hope alone is to be called 'realistic', because it alone takes seriously the possibilities with which

³Michael Green, Evangelism in the Early Church (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), 248.

all reality is fraught. It does not take things as they happen to stand or to lie, but as progressing, moving things with possibilities of change.⁴

So we who have benefitted from this vantage point are mandated by God to pass on this blessing, and the community should have an opportunity to accept or reject the value system of the Kingdom. Then, the church is mission when it participates in God's mission. Christians, forming a community of God, become instruments of God's mission when they participate in God's reconciling ministry.

Therefore the goal of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach as understood by this writer, is God's purpose to seek alienated humankind to be reconciled to God and to God's fellow people. And if Christian fellowship and Christian outreach prevails, humankind would be fully liberated and would be free to worship God and serve the needs of others.

Only the individual who has experienced psychological and spiritual freedom can stand for sociological, political, and economic freedom. A Christian person becomes responsible for justice among others because he/she believes in a just and righteous God who willed the abundant life for all. Therefore, anything that dehumanizes, desocializes, and depersonalizes a person in any way is contrary to the will of God.

Historically, the Black community has had its share of experiences of oppression, and an overabundance of problems,

⁴Jurgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (London: SCM Press, 1967), 25.

identifiable with the descriptive qualities mentioned above that can be systematically traced to the slave era in American history. Many books run the spectrum of enabling readers to catch a glean of the passing hope of a freed, yet oppressed people. Sociologists, psychologists, law enforcement, lawyers, housing experts, and health care specialists have all sought to analyze, prescribe, and cure urban ills. Others take the approach that sociology and psychology are effective disciplines which provide tools, instruments, and measurements to correct the systemic problems.

These professionals, along with others, look at the depth and the breadth of the systemic problems and attempt to solve them through educational and financial programs. However, such programs do not get to the heart of the issue for the Black community. The root of the problem is the inability of the broader community to cope with ethnic diversity and racism. While it may be argued that not every organization benefits directly from the positioning of previous organizations, the fact is that ethnic diversity and racism has affected everyone.

Therefore, Christian fellowship and Christian outreach today requires radical change in our present structures, practices, and ideologies. This means the willingness of the Black church and its denominational leaders to be aware of tradition and traditional values but also to amend its structures to meet the needs of the people in the community.

This means reaching out to a people of color, not with a paternalistic nor a triumphalistic attitude, but recognizing the image of God in everyone. This means revolt against many religious, social, political, and economical structures. Thus, it is the educational task of the Black church to join theological reflection with these processes, which expose the structures which still enslave. Also, to develop techniques for freedom and to give structure to those values to the Black experience for building community for God's people through constructive planning by its leaders.

Developing a Leadership Plan

My experiences at Grace and Calvary revealed churches caught in the throes of survival. Grace, on the one hand, had financial resources, plus access to funds from the Commission on Ethnic Ministries from the conference to implement Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. This church did not embrace the opportunity. Calvary, on the other hand, had no active outreach programs. And without an Evangelism Committee in place, it was unable to tap into the financial resources of the Commission on Ethnic Ministries.

Both churches, steeped in tradition, were denying change in changing times. In conflict between traditional values and change, children of members were not given an opportunity to develop leadership skills through Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. This resulted in a decline in their attendance and fellowship.

For example, at Calvary's annual church picnic, youth and young adults attended. Their names were on the church roll but they were not involved in ministry. They were children of members attending other churches because Calvary upheld tradition rather than Christian service, remaining naive of its purpose in a changing community.

When Christian fellowship and Christian outreach became cause for concern, this church's tendency was to expect the miraculous. Members expected this writer and others with a vision to embrace and accomplish this task by themselves.

These two churches were not running like sprinters trying to win the prize, but were holding on to basic tenets of Methodism without putting them into practice. By contrast, they were casting out values and tradition indigenous to Black culture over against redefining the tradition, in order to assimilate into the dominant culture. As a result, this writer saw a need to develop a theology of outreach through church leadership for this Black urban church.

What Leadership is Not

To clearly understand the dynamics of church leadership there must be knowledge of what it is not. Leadership is not an imposition of a person's biases on others in order to demonstrate prowess. Such an attitude can be attributed to cross-cultural differences a leader may project when placed in a geographic area that is totally alien from his/her world view.

Leadership is not a politically motivated quest for power while jeopardizing the well-being of others. Such a quest exists when the right of a people to direct and exercise church polity is denied and that right, in the logistics of the church, is replaced by laws and regulations developed by the denominational leadership to enhance themselves and subject others by those laws and regulations. That leadership style is not consistent with Biblical principles.

Leadership is not structured just to get a job done. In many instances while a church appears to be on stream, relationships between leader and members become strained. Polarization occurs due to a spiritually deficient leadership. This results in a church that exists as a physical plant, denying basic qualities necessary for healthy growth.

What Leadership Is

Everyone believes they know what leadership is; however, when asked to describe it, answers may vary depending on one's cultural background, ulterior motive, and biblical implications of true leadership. Therefore as stated earlier, leadership in the context of the church is the ability to bring Christian people together so they can accomplish God's purpose for their lives.

Ted Engstrom relates that the one major attribute which sets apart the successful organization from the unsuccessful, is dynamic and effective leadership.⁵ He believes it is an

⁵Theodore Engstrom, The Making of a Christian Leader (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976), 11.

attitude as well as an action that must be distinguished from management. He states:

1. Leadership is a quality;
management is a science and an art.
2. Leadership provides vision;
management supplies realistic perspectives.
3. Leadership deals with concepts;
management relates to functions.
4. Leadership exercises faith;
management has to do with fact.
5. Leadership seeks for effectiveness;
management strives for efficiency.
6. Leadership is an influence for good among potential resources;
management is the coordination of available organized for maximum accomplishment.
7. Leadership provides direction;
management is concerned with control.
8. Leadership thrives on finding opportunity;
management succeeds on accomplishments.⁶

Therefore, the effectiveness of leadership rests on the ability of a leader "to adapt his style of leadership to the people and the environment in which he operates."⁷ Leadership should embrace a life quality reflective of the life of Jesus Christ whom we strive to emulate.

And based on the authority of the pastor in a Black urban church, a pastor who does not demonstrate leadership is prone to fail.⁸ Then, leadership effectiveness, regardless of race, color, or denomination, is based on a leader "who guides

⁶Engstrom, 23.

⁷Kilinski and Wofford, 78.

⁸Massey and McKinney, 36, state that a pastor leads a people with power delegated to him under the watchful eye of the eternal God, and the power should be used carefully.

activities of others and who himself acts and performs to bring those activities about."⁹

Leadership Made Easy

A pastor must take inventory of what is happening within a community of believers, diagnosing vital signs to determine whether a church is healthy or if surgery is needed for remedial purposes. In Your Church Can Grow, Wagner lists seven indicators as the pulse of a healthy Church.¹⁰ While all seven are important, this writer believes that the most important is the effectiveness of that pastor to establish Christian fellowship by learning the language of a church prior to any attempts at Christian outreach in that community.

While a church is recognized as Black and urban, its membership may not be an homogeneous group. For example, the first meeting of the United Methodist Men of Calvary saw fifteen men from different parts of this country--East, mid-West, North, and South, all living in the West, with a pastor from the Caribbean--and all were Black.

This group met at a local diner in the city on the second Saturday of every month. My approach was primarily to be in dialogue with these men outside the church setting. Church matters were not discussed, rather conversations were centered around family concerns. What finally developed was a group that began to know one another, expressing concern and care,

⁹Engstrom, 24.

¹⁰C. Peter Wagner, Your Church Can Grow (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1976), 35.

after realizing we shared many things in common.

So a key ingredient is a pastor's ability to understand members in their life setting, since time spent in Christian fellowship at worship does not allow sharing a true understanding of a person's culture and worldview. But, helpful to the pastor in a Black urban church is that members, prior to joining the church family, will visit several churches to ensure recognition of identifiable traits through idioms as Hopewell records in his book, Congregation.¹¹

Hopewell reflects on this trend and draws from the analogy of the househunter. He equates four approaches--contextual, mechanical, organic, and symbolic--to strategies adopted by individual families in search of adequate housing facilities.¹²

They strive to make the best selections possible since these homes will become a physical representation of them-

¹¹In James F. Hopewell's Congregation (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 5-7, he states, "Thus a congregation is held together by much more than creeds, governing structures, and programs. At a deeper level, it is implicated in the symbols and signals of the world, gathering and grounding them in the congregation's own idiom.... Together the signals make up the idiomatic code by which a congregation communicates itself, enabling it to identify and integrate itself, to express its faith and love, to govern and sometimes to change its corporate behavior."

¹²Hopewell states that the contextual approach seeks to answer whether the community can satisfy that family's needs. The mechanical approach seeks to inform whether the house will provide a safe haven, once accepted. The organic approach tends to look at compatibility between family and home once occupied; and the symbolic approach seeks to address whether the house, once occupied, will reflect the family's identity. (See pp. 19-39.)

selves. So when a person expresses a desire to become a member and be in fellowship at a church, they shop around and find an attraction to the language of that church. Such a person believes he/she is receiving the best buy in town.

However, vital to language and helpful to this writer was the development of an in-reach evangelism program designed to equip members for the work of the ministry--to reach those who were unable to shop around.

Getting Ready

In order for Calvary to be effective, there must be long-term and short-term plans. Time must be spent by members in planning the church's future in ways that can be measured. Anyone embarking on a five-day road trip without charting a course and periodically checking it to measure their progress is likely to get lost.

Likewise, the mission of this church cannot be accomplished unless there is unity, purpose, and clear understanding within the body. Scheduled meetings, with committees and members at large to gain insight of their vision for that church, are important.

Too frequently, a Black urban church tends to view its purpose and measure its spiritual success with other successful churches. This church will tend to rely on its history and (most times), in developing a program, simply reflects ideas to satisfy a denomination, but these programs are never executed.

My observation at Calvary was that older members failed

to be supportive of the younger. Unless they were in control, in the driver's seat for any sort of programming or fundraising, the tendency was to take a back seat, then complain. But very important, and vital to restoring confidence in a Black urban church, is unity of purpose. So once accomplished, a workday meeting is encouraged, allowing members to study goals and objectives outlined in previous meetings, and giving them opportunity to package these ideas. Time should be spent in this exercise, and sensitivity to opinions and ideas based on culture should be a must because the success or failure of that church hinges on the atmosphere of these meetings and the decisions made.

However, overshadowing all goals and objectives designed for this church is the Biblical mandate of Matt. 28:19-20. In fact, the primary purpose of the existence of Calvary--everything done in the life of this church--should have as its end result, making disciples.

This writer believes that while committees have administrative and Christian responsibilities within a church, those responsibilities should also be viewed as a vehicle to reach others for Jesus Christ. It is not just a job, but it is a mission. Because, as stated earlier, a disciple of Jesus Christ needs to authenticate His lifestyle. This writer believes making disciples is the primary purpose of a church because of the command given to evangelize all the world. And like a road map, the church is also told how to accomplish it.

First, by making disciples, then those who belong to him

must lead others to accept him publicly through baptism. Once this is accomplished, the disciple is instructed to teach and equip the convert. So, if a church has fantastic goals and objectives but is not striving to accomplish the Biblical mandate, it must reevaluate its priorities.

Committees can be successful in accomplishing this mandate because of an equipped laity. Frank R. Tillapaugh, in his book, Unleashing the Church, affirms:

Our churches are full of highly trained, mature believers. Many have been trained in parachurch organizations, Bible colleges or seminaries. Others have been students of the Word for years. Yet we are so often structured to major on giving them more information about the Bible and the Christian life.¹³

So most churches have lay members capable of assisting a pastor in developing programs and training others. As stated earlier, this writer emphasizes the fact that neither pastor nor laity should fail to recognize that results of leadership and strategic planning are accredited to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all the people. Paul in an attempt to free the church at Corinth from partyism reminded them, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3:6 KJV). Also, prior to the Ascension of Jesus Christ, he reminded his apostles that the Holy Spirit will endow them with power to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8).

Therefore effective leadership and successful planning, within a church or its community, must be under the guidance

¹³Frank R. Tillapaugh, Unleashing the Church (Ventura, Calif.: Regal, 1982), 76.

and direction of the Holy Spirit in order to be effective. In his definition, Tidwell states, "A church is a fellowship of disciples making known to all, the gospel of Jesus Christ. Its mission is not to be a fellowship. That is its nature. It is a fellowship. Its mission is to make the gospel known. It is a fellowship on mission."¹⁴

Such a program is necessary because although a church is recognized as a body of believers in Jesus Christ, it does not imply that all is well within that church. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book Life Together, reveals that "It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living together under the Word."¹⁵

This is true since most churches are comprised of people from different parts of the country and the world, worshiping together. And though physical attributes might be similar, cultural differences and worldviews can create problems in worship and fellowship.

For example, a demographic profile done in 1988 for Grace United Methodist Church in Pasadena, revealed thirty-five thousand people within a one-mile radius of the church and fifty-five churches. In its "Population by Race and Spanish Origin" category, the report pointed to a 27.92 percent White, 57.03 percent Black, 0.58 percent American Indian, 3.46 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, 11.00 percent other races, and

¹⁴Tidwell, 67.

¹⁵Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together (New York: Harper, 1954, 17.

22.48 percent Spanish origin. While many could be United Methodist, coming together in fellowship can be problematic.

This is where, through careful planning, a pastor has to develop strategies geared at reaching the total church. It becomes less problematic, though diverse, when a board can be established with representatives from all cultural groups.

After understanding a church, bonding--becoming a close knit body--is important. A church cannot exist in a vacuum. Therefore, getting members ready for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach means demonstrating love and care, through their expressions of love to one another through fellowship. Only then can they demonstrate Christian fellowship to others in a community that they are yet to come in contact with through Christian outreach.

Where Are the People?

As a teenager in the Caribbean island of Trinidad thirty-five years ago, parish ministry (a Roman Catholic ministry serving a specific geographic area) was considered normative. The parish priest was not seen reaching out to members of that community doing door-to-door evangelism. Yet, the church was recognized as the central meeting place for every Christian to be for Sunday worship.

There were no outreach ministries where a pastor, like the village doctor, made house calls to assure the spiritual well being of his parishoners. There were no associates sharing the mission of the church for that community. People came to that church and made themselves available to meet with the

priest if matters of a spiritual nature were to be discussed.

Callahan refers to that time and sees it as the professional minister movement where the minister represented a church maintenance person, charged with the institutional welfare of that denomination. "They maintain a sense of presence, dignity, decorum, and decency--with a quietly sad regret--much like the thoughtful undertaker who sees to keeping things in good order throughout the funeral."¹⁶

With cities becoming urban melting pots, outreach ministry became sophisticated with a shift in focus from mission and community to education, and from the church building to the mission center.

But the biblical mandate remains specific in its command, requiring an individual to fulfill a commitment as he/she goes into all the world. So after a church prepares its members for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach, their sole purpose (in spite of administrative procedures), should be the voice of that church in the community.

With the advent of computer technology and census data, locating people "in the highways and byways" can become easier if church members participates in active Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. For example, to locate people in the community during my ministry at Grace a Full Data Report within a three-mile radius, and a Site Map of northwest Pasadena with census tract data on ethnic groups, particularly Blacks,

¹⁶Callahan, 4.

were obtained from National Decision Systems, Encinitas, California, for a nominal fee. As a result, Grace was able to develop a target ministry based on the information received.

The concept of going out and making disciples can be seen as a science where strategic planning for outreach can be done in the confines of a person's home or at their church with information at one's fingertips. So unlike the househunter, there are many who need the physician but might be unable to make visits without some persuasion. So components of mission --"worship, proclamation and witness, nurture and education, and ministry"¹⁷--are made homogeneous through Christian fellowship and Christian outreach, making it easier for the church to reach those who need nurturing.

Callahan looks at the church as a mission outpost, highlighting its characteristics, where the spotlight shifts from the comfort of the church office to the unpredictable outdoors--the world--for the missionary pastor and the laity.

Getting to Know You

But the greatest problem in Christian fellowship and Christian outreach is getting to know others in the community. Social and ecological barriers are built between us and them. First of all through cultural beliefs, then by church members generalizing the economic state of others in the community as unstable.

Though unstable may seem too harsh a word, it reflects

¹⁷Tidwell, 74.

the insecurity of a people in a community where unemployment is high. It reveals a community where emotions are strained because of the financial state of the people and the availability of drugs that saturate its streets. It reminds this writer, and maybe many others, of this community's irrational behavior due to a lack of higher education and a cry for a chance through remedial studies.

Most Black people who comprise the urban scene are people trying to make it in the city. Relocating from rural areas, many anticipated upper mobility through education, employment, and a renewed lifestyle. But many were caught in an urban trap that systematically denied them the dreams of success they had envisaged.

While some were able to achieve a measure of success, many found themselves languishing in urban poverty by becoming dependent on the city's welfare system--a lifestyle that has continued down to their children. Even the religious lifestyle they were accustomed to took on new meaning in the city. While this writer, the product of an oppressed people in the Caribbean, is sympathetic to the plight of the people, it is my belief that assimilation into the main culture has been the primary reason for the intended demise of Blacks. That it was and still is a systematic plan to deny Blacks their rightful place.

As a result, Black urban churches need to return to that old time religion which enabled Blacks to move up from the kitchens and gardens of their masters to institutions of

higher learning; to understand and accept the fact that in Christ all are equal. Then, embracing this fact and being an authentic witness, Christ is represented through all in the church and community.

When Los Angeles received a rude awakening after a 1992 verdict (believed to be incorrect) was delivered in the hearing of a Black man beaten by White law enforcement officers, it brought alive sentiments of a people who believe that, due to their economic state, they are forced to accept subhuman living conditions while the governing authorities assume that as long as they are all together--ethnic groups in this urban melting pot--that somehow, someday, they will survive; they will get along.

And somehow that philosophy has permeated the structure of most churches. This writer observed anger and hostility when people seeking aid came to Calvary. Yes, there is need to be concerned. But somehow, most churches--even Black urban churches with committees in place to assist in addressing community needs--are remiss in their efforts to address these needs or to be in partnership with neighborhood churches, hotels, and supermarkets, where, through governmental aid, more needs can be met.

And though a perception of a united front is maintained in this church, accepting community is a matter of opinion. For during the Los Angeles riots, while other churches were caught up in helping to restore calm and assisted in cleaning up after buildings were burned, it was business as usual at

Calvary. This attitude revealed that there was no sense of community because most members were commuters. They did not live within close proximity of the Church, except for two families.

My experience at Grace revealed members expressing a fervent desire for outreach, but who will not volunteer to visit homes in the immediate neighborhood. Black church members viewed this Black neighborhood as a people who failed to qualify to be in their social sphere.

Most of the people were second and third generation welfare families. And though most of their children attended tutoring classes sponsored by Grace, they were absent at worship service. Parents never attended. In fact, conversations with many of these less fortunate people revealed their sensitivity to members of Grace. "They are always dressed up," one young woman exclaimed. "I would sure look out of place in there." They also observed that church members avoided parking their cars in areas bordering their apartment homes. A definite polarization was experienced.

A strategy for getting to know people in the community embraces the method used by Jesus Christ on two occasions. When He met a woman of Samaria at the well, he did not avoid her but aroused her curiosity, got her interested in Himself as a Person, then, He placed himself under obligation to her, and finally He allowed her to respond.¹⁸

¹⁸See Lois E. LeBar, Education That Is Christian (Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books, 1989), 66-73.

Jesus used another strategy when He met Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. He set Nicodemus to thinking and questioning, similar to the Samaritan woman. He reached her at her level and He reached Nicodemus at a much higher level since he was a distinguished intellectual ruler.¹⁹

As followers of the principles of Jesus Christ, a church or its denomination should always keep the desires of its founding fathers paramount on their minds similar to what Jesus demonstrated. So the status and role of a member in a church should not alter or diminish their perception of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach. According to H. Richard Niebuhr in The Social Sources of Denominationalism:

Whenever Christianity has become the religion of the fortunate and cultured and has grown philosophical, abstract, formal, and ethically harmless in the process, the lower strata of society find themselves religiously expatriated by a faith which neither meets their psychological needs nor sets forth an appealing ethical ideal.²⁰

The Church as Servant

In order for a Black urban church or any church at all to fully accept the challenge of Christian fellowship and Christian outreach as demonstrated by Jesus Christ, it must be able to adopt a servant mentality. Again, this can only be accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit which enables the individual to remain committed to the task. It is not conditional, but mandated by Jesus Christ to all who are willing to

¹⁹LeBar, 73-76

²⁰H. Richard Niebuhr, The Social Sources of Denominationalism (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1987), 31-32.

surrender to His will and His way.

Paul's Damascus Road conversion experience revealed that in spite of all the abilities he possessed, it was the power of the Holy Spirit that made his life meaningful. He attested to his conversion by demonstrating leadership qualities that the Lord had revealed to Ananias during his moments of doubt. "Go thy way," the Lord told Ananias, "for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9:15 KJV).

"The Church must be the body of Christ, the suffering servant, and hence the Servant Church," says Avery Dulles.²¹ Expressing the sentiments of Cardinal Cushing, he states:

So it is that the Church announces the coming of the Kingdom not only in word, through preaching and proclamation but more particularly in work, in her ministry of reconciliation, of binding up wounds, of suffering service, of healing.... And the Lord was the "man for others," so must the Church be "the community for others."²²

As servant, a church is able to draw nearer to its community. It involves stepping outside of one's self in order to reach others. It means having all things in common with others that will bring wholeness and community in order that others will understand the Will of God.

As servant, it allows a church to learn about cultures other than its own. Just living in the state of California presents a conglomerate of cultures never before assembled in

²¹Avery Dulles, Models of the Church (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 34.

²²Dulles, 92-93.

one place. So it should be remembered that culture is not based on the color of one's skin. There are many people of similar skin tones, yet they do not communicate the same language.

But although Christian fellowship and Christian outreach can be diverse, its primary task can be realized by church members working together. Bonhoeffer refers to this principle as community through Jesus Christ. He states:

God has willed that we should seek and find His living Word in the witness of a brother, in the mouth of man. Therefore, the Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's Word to him. He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain or discouraged, for by himself he cannot help himself without belying the truth.²³

Working together in earnest for the good of the church and its community can restore credibility to a church and improve relationships with its membership. Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus takes a closer look at conflicts in the local church.

The optimum situation in a local church, then, is not the absence of conflict...nor is it a situation where persons are continually bickering, and fighting and attacking. Rather, conflict well used and managed is present and is handled to energize and mobilize the people to initiate action and respond to needs that they really care about in the church and its community.²⁴

As a result, the quicker a church can resolve its internal differences and become immersed in its mission and its community, the sooner members on the fringes will become aware of a

²³Bonhoeffer, 23.

²⁴Speed Leas and Paul Kittlaus, Church Fights (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), 38.

sense of purpose and belonging. This attitude can only result when there is Christian fellowship.

So the affirmation of the Apostle Paul (Eph. 4:11-13) for those in leadership--pastors and teachers--for the perfecting of those in a church and in its community is not a religious exercise. It is a responsibility as an equipper to continue without ceasing to strive to nurture the church of God until we are all mature in Christ.

Chapter 6

Summary: What Shall We Do?

There are many churches and agencies that are highly successful in their accomplishments of sending missionaries to foreign countries in hopes of spreading and translating the Word of God to other people. Retiring missionaries coming home have graphic stories to tell about their experiences and knowledge gained from living with people of another culture.

The reality of the work of the mission is that almost every major metropolis in this country is, or is becoming so urban that missionaries need to focus their attention home. This is crucial because the city has released its magnetic force within it and people from many countries and rural areas come seeking their dream.

The basic assumption is that by the turn of the century the city will also be the magnet for the disenfranchised poor. Already they are visible at highway intersections and major street corners. They are only the ones that are visible. Homeless shelters are overflowing, especially when temperatures fall too low for humans to bear; yet not too many see the overwhelming need to lend a hand.

Biblical records reveal the story of Jesus Christ and His banquet feast. Because of poor attendance he bade his servant to "Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame" (Luke 14:21 RSV).

That is still his command today, to reach out to a people

for Him--a people made in His image and His likeness. The cry in the city is great because another command was given to go out and urge anyone you can find to come in (Luke 14:23). Yet many have not given heed to the city. In his book, Apostles to the City, Roger Greenway reveals that "at no time in history has it been more true than now, that he who wins the city, wins the world. For Christians, this makes the development of a biblical and relevant urban apostolate a matter of primary concern."¹

Experiences shared by people reveal that because of problems in the city and the mere fact that we have to be an integral part of the city in many ways, the question that rings out in the minds of most is, "What Can We Do?" This writer believes that the numerous strategies developed, by trained theologians, to accomplish the work of the Great Commission have failed to resolutely reveal change and conversion in a people. So, the expectations of many, theologians and workers, is to be able to do "a great thing" to realize this work, while overlooking the basic principles established through Jesus Christ. Churches must embrace their communities by becoming involved in developing ministries geared to address concerns in their communities, and forming collations, networking with other pastors and churches in order to meet spiritual and social needs of those communities.

Two problems that are evident is that for most people

¹Roger S. Greenway, Apostles to the City (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 11.

their church community is secondary. Most have moved away due to upper mobility and their coming into that community to fellowship is a token representation. They have lost touch with what once was, and their focus is no longer on what seems frivolous, lacking in importance to them, for they no longer sit where others now sit. They are the commuting Christians.

Secondly, in small Black urban churches, members believe they are living in a bubble. Church members become introverted while being competitive with sister churches, making ministry a showcase, striving to be physically better while being spiritually weaker. Expressing a need for the city, like Jesus did, changes one's focus from one of professionalism to mission.

Boxed into a corner in this second concern is a disregard for young people. The quest for ownership and authority in the Black context, born out of slavery, has left its indelible impression on the minds of many. To others, it was a generational inheritance. Yet churches in the city are all facing the dawning of a new century with most of its people--"the Church of tomorrow," the youth and young adults--either involved in other activities or for young Black men, in jails.

Black urban churches and all churches need to envisage Christian fellowship and Christian outreach as the epitome of one's Christianity, viewing the urban setting as the last frontier. This writer sees this as a dynamic similar to his experiences in the workplace where an individual was motivated to produce by their earning skills. The church is no differ-

ent. The problem lies with Christians looking for a payday now, demonstrating lesser faith to wait for the impending return of Jesus Christ.

Yes, churches can make a difference. And while some can do so by themselves, just imagine how much more can be done in a community by working together--building cultural bridges by learning about one another. No longer will this writer hear that "He is not one of us because he is from the islands!" No longer will the young seek an alternative life-style because of rejection in their church home.

Cities no longer represent a workplace where still life exists in the evening time. It is a vibrant living organism called people. People with needs, with hurts, with dreams, with visions, and a people made in His image--willing to hear the truth of the gospel from those who claim it--that still can be called God's people, God's church. But to realize this goal of revitalizing an urban church requires a disciplined lifestyle of the believer that reflects Christ (Matt. 5:13). It also requires a commitment to Christ and the work of the ministry in one's setting (Matt. 5:14). In essence, it requires the believer to be a doer of the word (James 1:22), thereby an authentic witness.

Unity and constructive planning are necessary to bridge the breach in Christian fellowship among one another. Unity is necessary because making disciples requires a people of God coming together in love and harmony, working together, in order to assist in realizing the coming of Jesus Christ. For

too long a people, recognized in their community as God's representatives, continue to personalize their denomination and method of ministry. Some consider their method superior to others, and in the process, fail to embrace the biblical mandate.

Constructive planning is important because the biblical mandate is the same for every believer. It is the same for everyone who, through disciplined study and lifestyle, has considered themselves to be His disciple. It also allows the early church principle of Acts 4:32 (where all believers were one in heart and mind, sharing everything) to take effect. Churches with minimal resources for Christian fellowship and Christian outreach can receive assistance in order to maintain a physical presence and a spiritual need. Bridging the breach renders healing and aids the process of Christian outreach.

Yes, we are a Black urban church in the city. Yet, the spiritual and physical experience of each church will vary. But like taking a trip, plotting a course of travel with stops to rest, eat and refuel, the church must resort to constructive planning. Where are we going? How do we plan to get there? Who will lead us?

This study is not intended to provide answers--an instant fix--to all the problems of the Black urban church. Rather it reflects an attempt to objectify an internal growth process for the Black urban church which, if used, can be a guide for revitalizing your church and your neighbor's church.

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BASIC HISTORICAL DATA

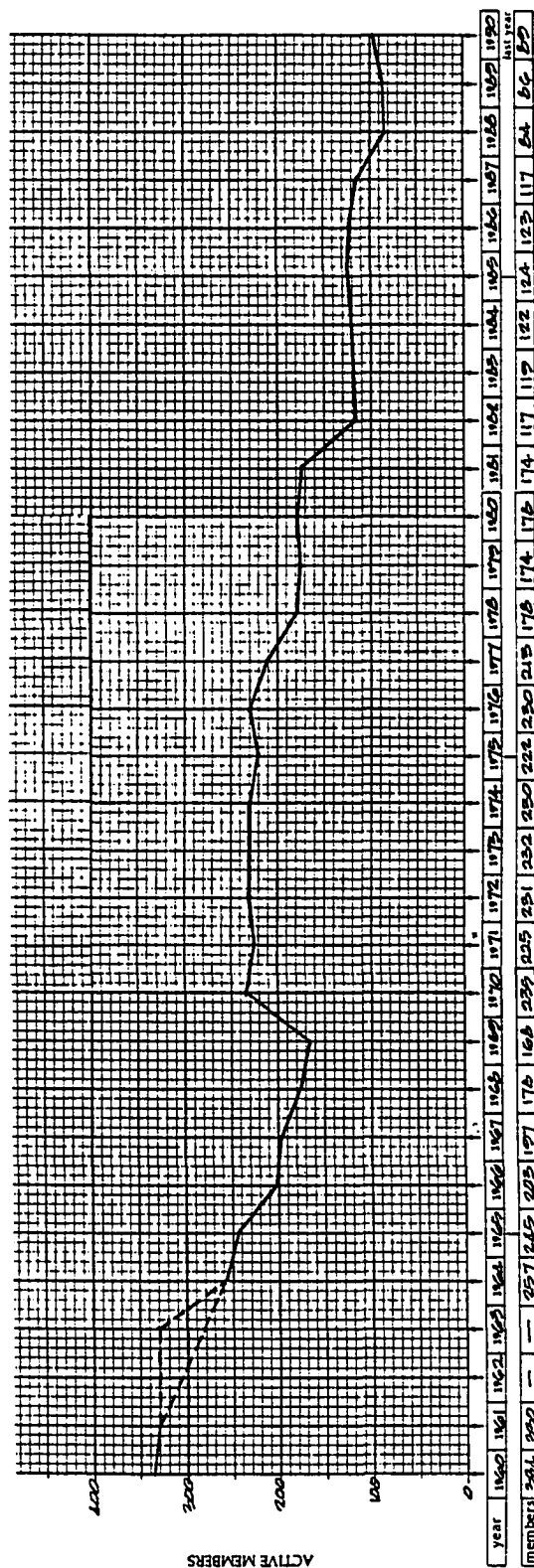
TABLE 1
APPENDIX A

	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
1. Active members	262	334	330	—	—	257	243	203	197	178	168
2. Worship attendance											
3. Sun. School Attend.											
4. Organized churches											
5. Preaching points											
6. Ordained pastors											
7. Lay pastors											
8. Missionaries											
9.											

	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
1. Active members	235	225	231	232	230	222	230	213	178	174	178
2. Worship attendance	105	103	93	70	87	93	87	78	65	62	61
3. Sun. School Attend.	58	50	50	54	45	30	25	15	8	12	10
4. Organized churches											
5. Preaching points											
6. Ordained pastors											
7. Lay pastors											
8. Missionaries											
9.											

	Diagnostic Period										Last Year
	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
1. Active members	174	117	115	122	124	123	117	84	86	89	105
2. Worship attendance	57	71	71	80	70	60	70	70	70	85	58
3. Sun. School Attend.	12	13	15	20	15	15	15	25	35	35	30
4. Organized churches											
5. Preaching points											
6. Ordained pastors											
7. Lay pastors											
8. Missionaries											
9.											

GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 BASIC HISTORICAL DATA
 GRAPH 1
 APPENDIX B



CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
BASIC HISTORICAL DATA
TABLE 2
APPENDIX C

	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969
1. Active members	272	322	329	351	419	444	450	200	200	212	214
2. Worship attendance	—	—	—	—	—	—	160	120	120	120	100
3. Sun. School Attend.	130	167	180	187	167	170	145	48	48	85	80
4. Organized churches											
5. Preaching points											
6. Ordained pastors											
7. Lay pastors											
8. Missionaries											
9.											

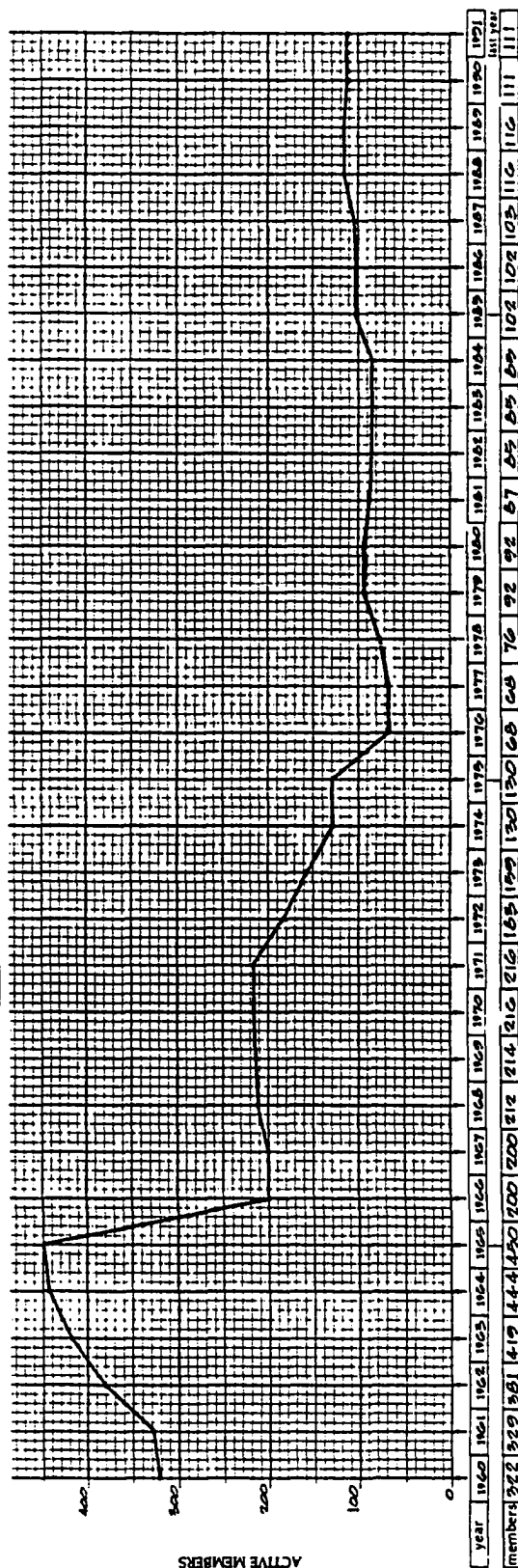
	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
1. Active members	214	216	183	157	130	130	68	68	76	92	92
2. Worship attendance	75	75	90	70	90	—	40	92	58	58	65
3. Sun. School Attend.	50	50	60	30	30	—	24	65	45	44	44
4. Organized churches											
5. Preaching points											
6. Ordained pastors											
7. Lay pastors											
8. Missionaries											
9.											

	Diagnostic Period										Last Year
	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991
1. Active members	87	85	85	—	102	102	103	116	116	111	111
2. Worship attendance	62	55	—	—	106	—	87	70	70	70	60
3. Sun. School Attend.	44	32	47	—	25	—	47	17	17	40	15
4. Organized churches											
5. Preaching points											
6. Ordained pastors											
7. Lay pastors											
8. Missionaries											
9.											

CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 BASIC HISTORICAL DATA
 GRAPH 2
 APPENDIX D

GRAPH 2

NAME CALVARY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 COMMUNITIES OF CHURCH



CENSUS '80 UPDATES & PROJECTIONS
NATIONAL DECISION SYSTEMS
POP-FACTS - FULL DATA REPORT
PREPARED FOR GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
WASHINGTON BLVD. AND IOWA ST. PASADENA, CA.
APPENDIX E

Description	1.0 Mile Radius	2.0 Mile Radius	3.0 Mile Radius
POPULATION			
1992 PROJECTION	38,809	99,003	170,880
1987 ESTIMATE	35,391	91,522	159,187
1980 CENSUS	30,464	80,680	142,195
1970 CENSUS	26,485	76,323	137,297
GROWTH 70-80	15.02%	5.72%	3.57%
HOUSEHOLDS			
1992 PROJECTION	12,941	35,841	66,999
1987 ESTIMATE	11,626	32,783	61,657
1980 CENSUS	9,737	28,331	53,843
1970 CENSUS	8,978	27,836	51,263
GROWTH 70-80	8.46%	1.78%	5.03%
POPULATION BY RACE & SPANISH ORIGIN			
30,464	80,688	142,195	
WHITE	27.92%	43.01%	58.07%
BLACK	57.03%	42.29%	29.10%
AMERICAN INDIAN	0.58%	0.57%	0.51%
ASIAN AND			
PACIFIC ISLANDER	3.46%	3.81%	4.41%
OTHER RACES	11.00%	10.31%	7.91%
SPANISH ORIGIN	22.48%	19.75%	15.84%
OCCUPIED UNITS			
9,737	28,331	53,843	
OWNER OCCUPIED	45.87%	49.00%	51.35%
RENTER OCCUPIED	54.13%	51.00%	48.65%
1980 PERSONS PER			
HOUSEHOLD	2.99	2.74	2.55
YEAR ROUND UNITS AT ADDRESS			
10,255	29,750	56,672	
SINGLE UNITS	72.20%	71.79%	70.05%
2 TO 9 UNITS	16.77%	13.67%	12.38%
10+ UNITS	10.97%	14.46%	17.50%
MOBILE HOME OR TRAILER	0.06%	0.08%	0.07%
SINGLE/MULTIPLE			
UNIT RATIO	2.60	2.55	2.34

1987 ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLDS
BY INCOME

	11,626	32,783	61,657
\$75,000 OR MORE	2.35%	4.92%	7.96%
\$50,000 TO \$74,999	5.62%	9.07%	11.81%
\$35,000 TO \$49,999	9.48%	12.71%	14.51%
\$25,000 TO \$34,999	14.42%	14.62%	15.00%
\$15,000 TO \$24,999	25.14%	22.29%	20.39%
\$7,500 TO \$14,999	22.47%	19.62%	16.70%
UNDER \$7,500	20.53%	16.76%	13.62%

1987 ESTIMATED AVERAGE
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

\$21,167	\$27,003	\$32,709
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1987 ESTIMATED MEDIAN

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

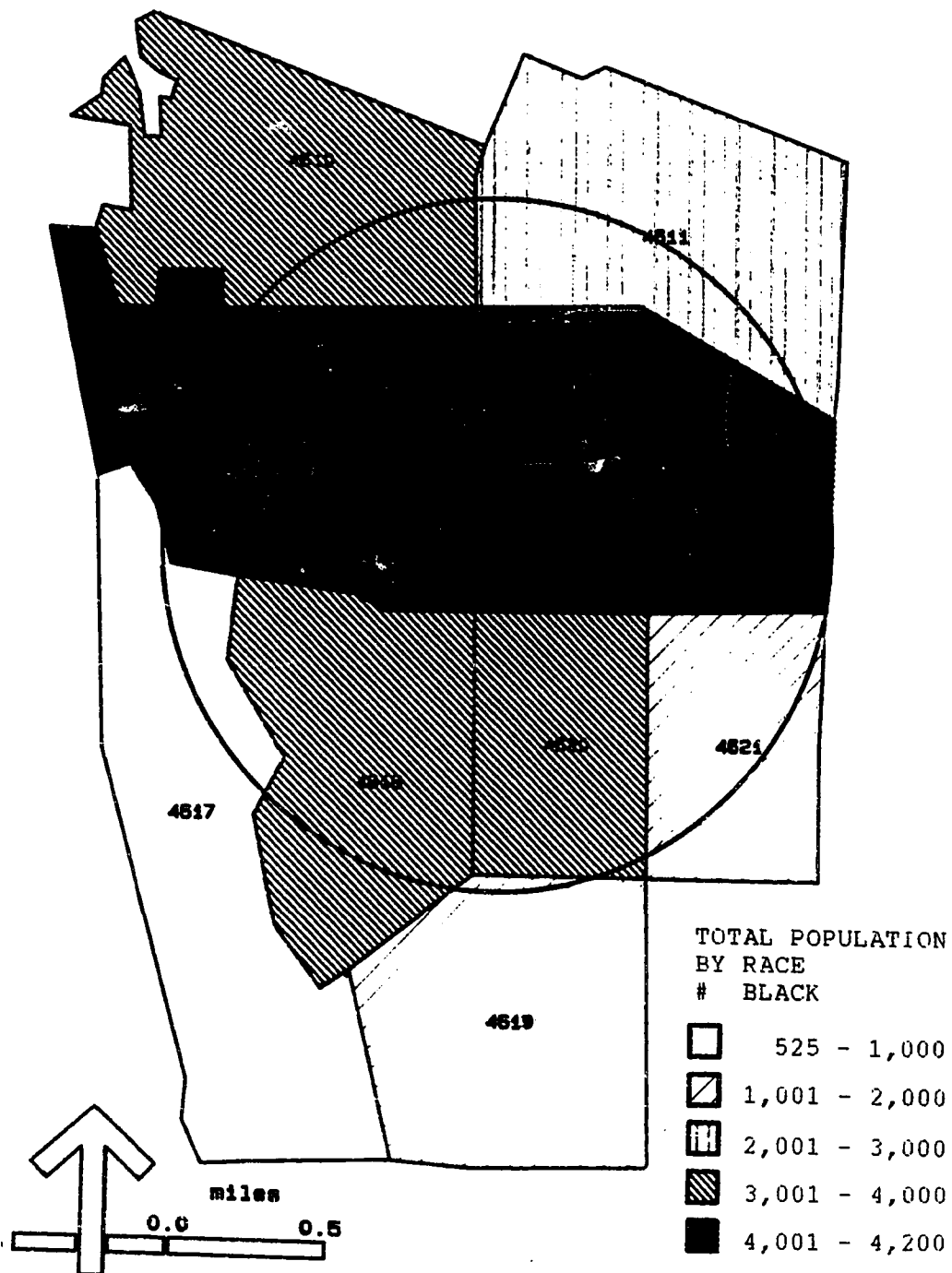
\$18,358	\$23,480	\$27,822
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1987 ESTIMATED PER

CAPITA INCOME

\$6,974	\$9,840	\$12,872
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CENSUS '80 UPDATES & PROJECTIONS
 NATIONAL DECISION SYSTEMS
 SITE MAP - GRACE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
 WASHINGTON BLVD. AND IOWA STREET, PASADENA, CA.
 1 MILE RADIUS BY CENSUS TRACT
 APPENDIX F



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